

The Ever Present Eye: a studio  
exploration of the moment and  
the everyday lived experience

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requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Tasmanian College of the Arts  
University of Tasmania  
February 2015

## DEDICATION

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For Dr Doris McIlwain (1957-2015)



## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in this thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis.

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6 February 2015

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## STATEMENT OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

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The research associated with this exegesis abides by the international and Australian codes on human and animal experimentation, the guidelines by the Australian Government's Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and the rulings of the Safety, Ethics and Institutional Biosafety Committees of the University.

Greer Honeywill

6 February 2015

## ABSTRACT

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*The ever present eye* is a studio exploration of the spectator and the effect of the transforming moment, when, in the 'blink of an eye', the everyday is interrupted by a transient experience of wonder or magical reflections upon the world, witnessed through a glance or discovered through the lens of the camera. The moment, as it is blinked into existence, is a complex entity. It may be characterised as expansive and revelatory – a moment in which the temporal and eternal conjoin, and it may also be a fragment capable of containing implicate fragments. My personal experience of a short-lived moment of wonder inspired intellectual curiosity and experimentation to both explain the event and to attempt to keep the extraordinary qualities of the moment present.

An attempt to engage with what has just passed and with the immediate drives this research project, stimulated by Elaine Scarry's idea that beauty incites the act of replication. Scarry cites drawing, photography or language as primary tools of replication. Today the camera is omnipresent, but no matter how quickly the iPhone, my *ever present eye*, is activated to replicate the moment the presentness of the moment is all but lost. The act of replication is also one of documentation, proof of existence, particularly of ephemeral actions that might pass unnoticed in the landscape, or in the momentary performance of a work.

Aliveness, created through engagement, is crucial to the extended life of ideas and to their originators. In this body of research I have collaborated with existing ideas and artworks conflating theory with artist interviews and studio experimentation. I have used an array of cameras, including CCTV and the iPhone, in order to participate in a dialogue of generational aliveness where the act of replication can also become an act of creation reflecting on what has gone before and on the world around us.

Just as CCTV technology provided artists with a new means of exploring the world the smartphone has become the technology of the present moment. The smartphone is now so *ever present* that artists are creating works that demand the participation of the spectator. The reciprocal dialogue between the work of the artist and the spectator in the form of hundreds of thousands of images that will then be disseminated across the world in an instant has never before existed. This project concludes that we are all changed by the omnipresence of this instrument – empowered and endangered – in a way that Kodak could never have anticipated at the turn of the last century. The smartphone camera is now central to our restless search for the moment, meaning and knowledge of our everyday world.

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Perhaps the most long suffering is my husband Ross Honeywill who endured my PhD at Monash only to be faced a decade later with another PhD. No-one could have given me more support, encouragement and love.

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# Introduction

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## Introduction

The reader is to discover for himself in what way difference stems from the essence ...by listening to the harmony presiding over the event of appropriation and perdurance. In this realm one cannot prove anything, but one can point out a great deal.

– MARTIN HEIDEGGER<sup>1</sup>

A tiny discarded mirror toy for a bird and its reflection of light created a sudden experience of wonder that I could easily have overlooked or failed to recognise. The experience was so profound that I intervened in an attempt to replicate the effect – to both explain the event and keep the extraordinary qualities of the moment present.

The *ever present eye* is a studio exploration of the effects and the possibilities of the transforming moment within everyday lived experience. The everyday can be transformed in the blink of an eye and this transformation can be witnessed in a glance or through the lens of the camera. What is revealed may be an extraordinary object that produces delight, dazzling moving reflections, or a veil of iridescence. Experiences, gathered fragments and the residue of remembered moments link in turn to the ephemeral performative act or interventions created by the artist. These interventions no matter how subtle, change the circumstance for the spectator, momentarily or forever.

Timeliness is central to this exploration. The *ever present eye* is sited within the now, a vast and changing present filled with ever increasing amounts of technology in support of looking, capturing and archiving images. Today the camera is omnipresent, but no matter how quickly the iPhone, my *ever present eye*, is activated to replicate the moment, the presentness of the moment is found to have just passed. The act of documenting, particularly in photographic form, creates a replica, proof of existence, particularly of ephemeral actions that might pass un-

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<sup>1</sup> Heidegger, M, Stambaugh, J (translation and introduction) 1969, *Identity and difference*, Harper & Row, New York, pp. 21-22.

noticed in the landscape, or in the momentary performance of a work.

In the studio it is my intention to develop a platform for ‘collaboration’ that will allow me to make a body of work that plays with and responds directly to existing ideas and artworks, conflating theory with artist interviews, research and studio experimentation in order to participate in a dialogue of generational aliveness. For me this is a new approach that emphasises the timeliness of this research and our current ability to connect with ‘everything’ – in a moment. Generational aliveness, created through engagement, is crucial to the extended life of ideas and to their originators. The act of replication can also become an act of creation, reflecting on what has gone before, on the immediate and on the world around us. I will explore aspects and effects related to current image capture and surveillance technology, particularly CCTV and the smartphone, with a view to gathering, recording, and documenting fragments of the architecture of everyday life, contextualised as art. I do this in an attempt to engage with both the immediate and the lingering essence of the ‘just passed’.

Within this context, questions arise about the relentlessness of the gaze of the CCTV camera and the smartphone. Has living within the constant gaze of CCTV cameras and smartphone cameras changed the relationship between the observed and the observer? We cannot escape the gaze – we are always watched and we are always watching.<sup>2</sup> Academic, Daniel Palmer says that it is unsurprising that:

...the resulting promiscuity of the gaze has generated equal measures of enthusiasm and anxiety. For as much as phone cameras are advertised as enabling intimacy-at-a-distance, and celebrated as devices of the on-the-spot participatory ‘citizen’ photojournalism... they are also intertwined with larger social anxieties about privacy in an age of digital dissemination...the terms ‘digital image’ and ‘loss of control’ have become synonymous.<sup>3</sup>

Journalist and writer Anna Minton, looking at the flip-side of Palmer’s anxiety says that today

<sup>2</sup> Pane, A (Dr) 2013, ‘Into darkness’, *The Weekend Australian Magazine*, Saturday 7 September 2013, pp. 22-25.

Reference to the act of watching, the eye and the glance make it important to clarify the fact that our eyes do not see – despite our romantic notions of the eye – rather the brain sees, as surgeon and ophthalmologist Dr Anthony Pane says:

*Many people mistakenly think that we see with our eyes. We don't. We see with our brains. The eyes just take pictures. The visual system is like two video cameras (the eyeballs) and a processing computer (the brain). The video cameras capture the images; the brain processes and makes sense of the pictures. Each camera is joined to the computer with a cable – the optic nerve. The two optic nerves are fragile and tiny, only 3mm wide and 5cm long. But they are incredibly important. Your eyes can be healthy, your brain can be fine, but if your optic nerves don't work you won't see a thing.*

Elkins, J 1998, *The object stares back*, Harvest /Simon & Schuster, New York. p. 48.

Writer, historian and critic, James Elkins says, if

*...I look into someone's eyes and think of the fact that the eye is nothing but a rotating sack of fluid, then an eye becomes an unsettling thing: I see the eye but it does not see me. What sees is the mind, the person connected to the eye, but the eye itself is just tissue...*

<sup>3</sup> Palmer, D 2011, ‘Art on the run: ubiquitous mobility and the camera phone’, *Artlink: Art & Surveillance*, vol. 31, no. 3, p. 20.

we feel a need to be watched which plays out in a curious and particularly addictive way, ‘... with people finding that however much they have it can never be enough and that rather like an addictive drug, once they have got used to it they can’t do without it.’<sup>4</sup>

The smartphone with a camera has taken less than seven years to become *ever present* in the western world. As we constantly search for meaning in the world in which we live how has the omnipresence of the smartphone changed us? Everyman(woman) is now a performer, a photographer and publisher in thrall to this object. In this state of distraction and irreality is it still possible to *see* and *feel* the moment or recognise that ‘...sudden experience of an extraordinary object that produces delight?’ – an experience we call wonder.<sup>5</sup>

The methodology underlying this exploration follows a phenomenological pathway typified by the act of gathering – the gathering of fragments of the every-day lived experience. In this act of gathering, imperfections arise since uncertainty and chance play a role. The act of gathering contributes to an archive of the found – of both the present and the residue of what has been left behind. In this mode things may be left out, passed over, or remain incomplete. Ultimately, in the offering up of what is gathered, the re-assembly or re-imagining of these residues, the spectator is asked to pay attention to what is given rather than to what might have been. As the gatherings are examined I search for points of slippage between life lived and life captured as art that demonstrate the poetry and humanity evident in lives lived within the constant stare of the camera...any camera.

Four connective themes are at play throughout this research – *wonder*, *walking*, *mirror reflections* and the *replication* of the moment. While reflections and mirrors have appeared in my works in various forms over the years and walking has been the stimulus for many ideas, I look anew at these effects. In a single long sentence in Vladimir Nabokov’s novel, *The Gift*, the author succinctly ushers in the four themes.<sup>6</sup> I draw on these themes to link discoveries made within interviews, research and studio experimentation with ideas generated on meandering walks.<sup>7</sup> These discoveries made in the flux are likened to islands of knowledge that I then metaphorically stitch together to form a tapestry of ideas, perspectives and new ways to view the world. In this project the themes are used as links to create what in all probability is an imperfect tapestry. However, imperfection in the form of an occasional darn, can have its own

<sup>4</sup> Minton, A 2011, *Ground control: fear and happiness in the twenty-first century*, Penguin, London, p. 171. Also quoted in Bauman, Z & Lyon, D 2013, *Liquid surveillance: a conversation*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 105.

<sup>5</sup> Fisher, P 1998, *Wonder, the rainbow, and the aesthetics of rare experiences*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 123.

<sup>6</sup> Nabokov, V, Scammell, S (translation) 1991, *The gift* (1963), Vintage International Books, New York, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> The sentence in full is included in section 2, chapter 1.



perfection.

In *The Gift*, as American academic Philip Fisher points out, Nabokov's character, the writer Fyodor, experiences *wonder* in the midst of the everyday while *walking* across an ordinary street to an ordinary pharmacy.<sup>8</sup> The act of walking, as the reader will discover, is a recurring theme, which historically links to the intellect, an idea dating back to Aristotle. As Fyodor walks across the road a shaft of intense sunlight reflected from the surface of an everyday mirror suddenly hits his forehead. The blinding effect of the ricocheting light and the unexplained glimpse of an upside down, cinematic world, makes real the phenomenon of wonder for this man.<sup>9</sup> Wonder and walking share a deep historical, philosophical and creative connection linking Jean-Jacques Rousseau's solitary wanderer to Walter Benjamin's flâneur,<sup>10</sup> the Land artists to Francis Alÿs. Fyodor's experience was stimulated by reflectivity – the sun, shining on a mirror, reflected back onto his forehead linking three points. It is a destabilising event, that throws Fyodor metaphorically off balance. While wonder is found in the everyday the experience and effect is far from everyday. When the writer looks around to see what caused the burst of light he finds his world momentarily inverted, reflected upside down in the mirror of a dresser as it is loaded into a truck. This magical, trembling, imagery of inverted sky and trees delights Fyodor. The unexpected effect of light and the ambiguity of *reflections* transmitted from mirrors or mirror-like surfaces is the third theme.

Much has been written over centuries about mirrors and reflections. For example Shakespeare viewed the soul as a 'glassy essence,'<sup>11</sup> while Jorge Luis Borges wrote about his mirror phobia, and Joan Faust delighted in Andrew Marvell's poetic notion of tears as mirrors.<sup>12</sup> Then there is the question of my own reflection in the mirror. The 'I' that looks at me and the 'me' that is reflected. The mirror, as Lewis Carroll demonstrated, creates a subversive and ambiguous universe purporting reality but in truth its images are far from reality. Edward S. Casey quotes

<sup>8</sup> Fisher, P 1998, *Wonder, the rainbow, and the aesthetics of rare experiences*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> Nabokov, V, Scammell, S (translation) 1991, *The gift* (1963), Vintage International Books, New York, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), in his unfinished *Arcades Project* (1927-1940) documented the sites and imagined experiences of the 19<sup>th</sup> century flâneur who *passed* within the glass-roofed *streets* of Paris. Benjamin walked to re-trace imagined paths and as he walked he glanced, he stared – he hid in plain sight as he observed the spectacle – just as the flâneur of old had done. And as he looked the *objects* looked back making him complicit in a whispering chorus of reciprocal looks whose echoes expanded to fill the Arcades.

Edward S. Casey reflecting on Benjamin's work says

...perambulating at our own pace, looking around at our leisure, and thereby taking in the whole scene – the city and the people gathered in one complete visual spectacle – all at once and in a single sweeping glance. Such spectacle is cause for wonder.

Casey, ES 2007, *The world at a glance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p. 241.

<sup>11</sup> Shakespeare, W circa 1338 (undated version), *The complete works of Shakespeare*, 'Measure for Measure, Act II, scene II', Collins Clear-Type press, London, P. 116.

Also Rorty, R 1980, *Philosophy and the mirror of nature*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, p. 42.

<sup>12</sup> Faust, J 2012, *Andrew Marvell's liminal lyrics: the space in between*, University of Delaware Press, Lanham, pp. 130-146.

David L Miller who said:

...there is a twinkle in the perspectival eye...everything is a mirror: mirrors mirroring mirrors, up and down and in and out...And everything *is* a mirror when it is reflected upon, for in the reflections the world twinkles back at us.<sup>13</sup>

But it is more than mirroring, Casey claims, ‘...it is the sense that the world at which we glance somehow looks back at us.’<sup>14</sup>

Fyodor continues walking to the pharmacy but what ‘...had taken him unawares...released in him that pleasant something...’<sup>15</sup> He smiled to himself as he walked on. In another time, as Benjamin walked the Arcades of Paris (a decade before the fictitious Fyodor arrived in Berlin from Russia) he thought about desire and replication. ‘Every day’ he said, ‘the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction.’<sup>16</sup> Six decades later, Elaine Scarry wrote about replication and reproduction from a different point of view describing the initial observance of beauty as being akin to wonder. Just as wonder promotes a pattern of learning or enquiry about something we did not know before, the observance of beauty promotes the act of *replication*. The simplest form of replicating beauty, according to Scarry is staring in order to translate ‘...the glimpsed image’ into an extended moment, to watch for ‘...five seconds, twenty-five seconds, forty-five seconds...’ or as long as the phenomenon lasts.<sup>17</sup> Fyodor committed his moment of wonder to memory, an unreliable and fading archive. He did not have an iPhone.

Given the significance of the moment to this body of work it is relevant to look at a sampling of philosophical viewpoints related to this complex entity. The moment, as it is blinked into existence, may be characterised as expansive and revelatory, an entity in which the temporal and eternal conjoin. Alternatively, it might also be a fragment capable of containing ‘implicate fragments.’ Edward S. Casey in *The World at a Glance* defines the moment as an entity lacking in temporal breadth which ‘...can only be encountered in the unexpected emergence of an event that we experience *as suddenly happening*’ and this suddenness has the potential to link in turn to the momentary experience of wonder. Casey continues, ‘For Kierkegaard and Heidegger, the sudden occurs as the Moment, the Augenblick – not a timeless instant but an open moment in which the temporal and the eternal conjoin...or in which decisiveness occurs.’<sup>18</sup> Casey says the effect of the glance, the promiscuous, constantly moving action of the eye, ‘*severs space*’

<sup>13</sup> Casey, ES 2007, *The world at a glance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, pp. 470-471.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 470-471.

<sup>15</sup> Nabokov, V, Scammell, S (translation) 1991, *The gift* (1963), Vintage International Books, New York, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> Benjamin, W 1936, ‘The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction,’ in Arendt, H (ed.) Zohn, H (translation) 1969, *Illuminations: essays and reflections*, Schocken, New York, p. 223.

<sup>17</sup> Scarry, E 1999, *On beauty and being just*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, pp. 3-5.

<sup>18</sup> Casey, ES 2007, *The world at a glance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p. 212.

while ‘moments (Augenblicke) and instants in their pointed and spotty ways *cut up time*. This severing and cutting creates in an instant, an event, ‘...wherein the now and the here comeingle all at once, making space and time confluent in one gleaming moment.’<sup>19</sup> The severing spawns the fragment that searches endlessly for the moment from which it arises, a moment born from the sudden and unexpected.<sup>20</sup> But the fragment can be ambiguous. On the one hand it implies secret connections to everything, a promise of wholeness, while on the other hand the fragment describes its complete isolation.<sup>21</sup>

French Philosopher Pierre Hadot suggests the observation of the fragment is more powerful than the whole because in that instant without past or future ‘...we possess the totality of the universe...the whole of reality [exists] within the present instant, and even infinite duration could not give us more...’<sup>22</sup> Nietzsche championed the idea of the eternal recurrence in the moment however in his view the instant is not an instant measured in time, rather an instant that encompasses eternity. The moment Nietzsche describes not only lasts a lifetime, it repeats eternally in the same way, in the same sequence of activity: the moments of one’s life lived over and over again in search of the meaning and value.<sup>23</sup> This may be seen as a wretched way to live a life or it may be seen as rewarding.

Against this background of complexity I search for unexpected fragments in the present instant, the living moment, that moment of recognition or that moment of capture by my *ever present eye* (the iPhone).

The advent of the camera for the masses in 1900 marked the point at which photography gradually became the most frequent means of creating a record of the everyday to which we once repeatedly returned to look at family albums or overflowing boxes of photographs. However, since the release of the smart phone, in particular the iPhone in 2008, everything has changed. The sheer number of photographs taken in a year means the likelihood of returning to survey the images is greatly diminished. A prescient John Berger said in 1991 that the camera relieved us of the burden of memory.<sup>24</sup> In our present state of being, the more we record the less we review and this is becoming the new reality – a present world without history, without memory.

<sup>19</sup> Casey, ES 2007, *The world at a glance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, pp. 17-18.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>21</sup> Shattuck, R 1984, *The innocent eye: on modern literature & the arts*, Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, p. 38.

<sup>22</sup> Hadot, P, in Davidson, AI (ed.) Chase, M (translator) 1995, *Philosophy as a way of life: spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, p. 229.

<sup>23</sup> Nietzsche, F, Kaufmann, W (translation and commentary) 1974, *The gay science* (1882), Vintage Books, New York, p. 273.

<sup>24</sup> Berger, J 1991, *About looking*, Vintage International, New York, p. 59.

Today, the smartphone is in command of still images, video, sound tracks and post- production, all in an instant. It is now almost redundant to speak of the separation between moving and still image. As the Artistic Director of the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Juliana Engberg says:

Video cameras, as such, seem nearly redundant. Almost everyone carries a small portable device capable of taking photos, making films and navigating places – creating, connecting and sending images and words out into the fibre-optic world.<sup>25</sup>

Commentaries on photography made in the past by Susan Sontag, John Berger and Roger Scruton, for instance, remain as relevant today to the all-encompassing qualities of the *ever present eye*. The smartphone is now so omnipresent that artists are creating works that demand the participation of the spectator. The reciprocal dialogue between the work of the artist and the spectator in the form of hundreds of thousands of images that will be disseminated across the world in an instant has never before existed.

Three important considerations have influenced the development of this document:

STRUCTURE:

In sections 2, 3 and 4, I discuss works from my body of research alongside relevant theoretical and philosophical literature and artworks. This approach is taken to create a seamless narrative based on a 'collaborative' approach that conflates studio experimentation and making, with existing and past ideas, theory, artworks and artist interviews. These sections have also been constructed as stand-alone narratives with a view to future publication. To facilitate examination, bridges have been created to link the sections.

Section 1 is the *Introduction*.

Section 2 *Wonder, Reflection and the Moment* consists of three chapters – chapter 1 *Wonder and Accidental Moments of Beauty*, chapter 2 *Reflection and Replication* and chapter 3 *The Innocent Eye and the Moment*. Chapter 3 includes discussion of the studio work *Arcadia*. Central to the making of this work is my experience of wonder and the entity that made the experience possible – a tiny, four-sided mirror toy I call the innocent eye.

Section 3 *The Mechanical Eye and the Moment* consists of four chapters – chapter 1 *CCTV the Artist and the Archive of Moments: part I* and chapter 2 *CCTV the Artist and the Archive of Moments: part II* focus on Christian Boltanski and his work *The Life of C.B.* a portrait composed of constantly accumulating present moments using a data stream from three CCTV cameras installed in the artist's Paris studio. I create a reflective work called *Blow-Up* where my image is extracted from the flux of Boltanski's archive to live again in a new context. Chapter 3 *The Gathered Fragment, the Camera and the Act of Walking* looks at a studio work using CCTV to capture the rhythm of people walking the thirty-six steps along my front fence, an act that takes twenty-one seconds and is repeated day after day in a variety of ways. *Walking the Dog (and other things)* and *Coming and Going* are the works arising for this focus. Chapter 4 *The Constantly Moving Eye* looks at a work created by Rebecca Shanahan called *Neighbours* composed of a gathering of moving images captured by a camera strapped to a bicycle (the equivalent of a moving CCTV camera).

Section 4 *Extending the Moment* consists of three chapters – chapter 1 *The Artist Walks the Camera into Position* which looks at artists who walk to make art and artists who make ephemeral works

<sup>25</sup> Engberg, J 2014, 'Introduction', in Capurro, C 2014, *Christian Capurro: SLAVE*, exhibition catalogue, 16 August- 28 September 2014, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, AUS, n.p.

that require 'proof of existence' most likely in the form of a photograph. I play with Francis Alÿs' work *The Nightwatch* inserting foxes into the foxless, arcadian landscape of Tasmania at a time when vested interests were creating a fear campaign. Chapter 2 *Playing with Glass and Mirrors* looks at extending the moment through the act of generational replication, a somewhat controversial approach that nevertheless ensures an extended life for both the original work and the originating artist. I also discuss my re-presentation of a 1969 work by Bruce McLean. Chapter 3 *Glass and Mirrors* looks at installations, often erected outside the formality of the gallery, that require activation by the spectator – in effect bringing into being a new form of contract between the artist and the spectator in which the *ever present eye* becomes a significant factor.

Section 5 is the *Conclusion*

#### PRIMARY ART SOURCES:

Just as scholars seek out primary sources in critical literature, wherever possible, artworks cited in this research have been seen and experienced first-hand rather than as book images or photographs. I consider this decision to be of particular importance. In the case of large-scale installations and performance works, photographs fail to capture the whole or communicate the visceral experience of the work. This can only be experienced in reality by looking at and walking within and around the work. Major works cited in this body of research have been experienced in Australia, Britain, France, Italy and the USA.

#### FIELDWORK:

Research began with a self-directed project called *Five Appointments* with Sydney-based psychologist, Dr Doris McIlwain, private practitioner and senior lecturer at Macquarie University.<sup>26</sup> Discussions focused on the psychological imperatives of looking/mirroring, surveillance, repetition, capture and seriality.

Interviews were conducted with four visual artists: French artist Christian Boltanski, Sydney-based artist and academic Rebecca Shanahan, Wollongong-based artist and academic, Lucas Ihlein and his Canberra-based collaborator, filmmaker Louise Curham.

Nicole Durling, senior curator, MONA was interviewed about Christian Boltanski's work, *The Life of C.B.*

All interviews were conducted with the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania).<sup>27</sup>

I have chosen to walk the landscape of this exploration like Jacques Derrida – as I progress my intention is to try to place myself at a point where I do not know any longer where I am going.<sup>28</sup> This condition of unknowing, this turning from teleology, is where the journey begins, and in walking the terrain the style of the flâneur is adopted. My intention is not in the words of Heidegger, 'to prove anything,' rather it is the exploration and the sudden unexpected encounter or discovery that is important. Colin Lyas, in his introduction to *Aesthetics: Fundamentals in Philosophy*, says provocatively, 'I have no great confidence that anything I say is right in an absolute sense...' <sup>29</sup> This is both a challenge and an invitation to the reader to explore, to decipher and to agree or disagree. Just as Socrates insisted that to know what it is that we do not know is the humbling first step of true knowledge.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> In 2010 architects Woodhead International were shortlisted for the Venice Architecture Biennale. I was invited to join the cross-disciplinary team selected to contribute to the submission. Dr Doris McIlwain was also a member of this team.

<sup>27</sup> Notes from the *Five Appointments* and transcripts of all interviews can be found in the appendix.

<sup>28</sup> Derrida, J, in Macksey, R & Donato, E (eds) 1972, *The structuralist controversy: the languages of criticism and the sciences of man*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, p. 276.

<sup>29</sup> Lyas, C, Shand, J (ed.) 1997, *Aesthetics: fundamentals of philosophy*, McGill Queens University Press, Montreal, p. xi.

<sup>30</sup> Fisher, P 1998, *Wonder, the rainbow, and the aesthetics of rare experiences*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 9.

# Wonder, Reflection and the Moment

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02

# 02

## 01 Wonder and Accidental Moments of Beauty

...suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her. There was nothing so very remarkable in that: nor did Alice think it so very much out of the way to hear a Rabbit say to itself, 'Oh dear! I shall be too late!'[...] but when the Rabbit actually *took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket*, and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet...

– LEWIS CARROLL<sup>31</sup>

I begin, perhaps not exactly at the beginning because the beginning is more likely to be an end. As T. S. Eliot said in *Little Gidding*, what '...we call the beginning is often the end and to make an end is to make a beginning.'<sup>32</sup> I make my ambiguous start in the halo of the *after* of a remembered experience of wonder and the accompanying joy of discovery. This discovery was made real by a worn and ordinary entity, a discarded four sided mirror toy for a bird, which I now refer to as the *innocent eye*. The *innocent eye* fuelled by a soft breeze appeared to 'see', 'answer' and reflect as it rotated, although it could not capture or hold the largesse within its reflective miniature gaze. As I will discuss in this chapter, in his book *The Gift*, the novelist Vladimir Nabokov paints a clear picture of what happens when bright light and the surface of a mirror interact. The sudden transmission in the form of a flash or flare of light, an almost blinding effect, that is surprising and sometimes unfathomable, can prompt the response, 'I wonder.' The combination of the sudden experience followed by the wondering has the potential to transport the intellect to another place.

Plato believed that images reveal themselves first as, '...shadows, and then reflections in water or in closely grained, polished surfaces...' <sup>33</sup> and he believed that the mind was a mirror although philosophers no longer agree. Writer and academic, Richard Rorty says '...there are

<sup>31</sup> Carroll, L, Tenniel, J (illustrations), Gardner, M (introduction & notes) 1960, *The annotated Alice: Alice's adventures in wonderland & through the looking glass*, Bramhall House, New York, pp. 25-26.

<sup>32</sup> Eliot, TS 2001, *Four quartets*, 'Little Gidding, V', (first printed 1944), Faber and Faber, London, p. 44.

<sup>33</sup> Fogelin, R 1971, 'Three platonic analogies', *The Philosophical Review*, Duke University, vol. 80, no. 3, pp. 371-382.



few believers in Platonic ideas today...' but '...the image of our Glassy Essence remains with us.'<sup>34</sup> It was Shakespeare who coined the phrase *glassy essence* in his play *Measure for Measure* (1623).<sup>35</sup> Instead of the mind as mirror philosophers today are more likely to talk about, '...the world as a mirror of meaning,' as philosopher, writer and academic, Jeff Malpas does in his work, *Davidson's Holism: Epistemology in the Mirror of Meaning* (2010).<sup>36</sup> Mirrors, reflections, light and strange transmissions are the ingredients that fuelled a cluster of rare and surprising events.

To create a context for my experience of wonder I begin with a sampling of past and recent scholarly writings on wonder using author and Harvard academic Philip Fisher's work, *Wonder, the Rainbow and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences* (1998) as a guide in my exploration of this terrain. Wonder was highly valued by the ancient philosophers. They were the first to acknowledge the unanticipated, everyday moments capable of inspiring this ungovernable event. They recognised the capacity of wonder to promote intellectual curiosity, learning and discovery, its sphere of influence reaching every field of endeavour including the artist's studio. If the moment of wonder, which is often ephemeral, is so valuable can we hold on to it in some way? How do we extend the moment when we see something extraordinary even as it is slipping away? Exploring wonder and ways of extending what Philip Fisher calls, '...accidental and extremely short-lived moments of beauty...' <sup>37</sup> are the focus of this chapter.

The Rev. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, aka Lewis Carroll, reminds us, in his two remarkable and long-lived novels, *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) and *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (1871), of the power of nonsense as a literary form and the alluring qualities of reflection and mirror imaging. The events of the story line meddle with the heroine's mind and eye, producing a profusion of moments of wonder for the adventurer, and in the process, challenge the intellectual abilities and imagination of the reader. The good Reverend, who barely gave a sermon, placed *Alice* in a world of continual surprise and sudden change, over which she had no control. Alice struggled to make sense of what she understood in the 'old' world as everyday, while overcome by events and characters in her 'new' world, a place that inspired constant wonder. Talking flowers, unicorns and sudden changes in physical size aside, Philip Fisher writes from a

<sup>34</sup> Rorty, R 1980, *Philosophy and the mirror of nature*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, pp. 42-45.

<sup>35</sup> Shakespeare, W, Irving, H (essays) circa 1905, *The complete works of Shakespeare*, Collins' Clear-Type Press, London and Glasgow. p. 116.  
In *Measure for Measure*, (first published 1623), Act II, scene ii, Isabella, a novice nun, uses the visceral term, *glassy essence* as she pleads for her brother's life.

<sup>36</sup> Malpas, J, revised text 2003 and 2010, *Davidson's holism: epistemology in the mirror of meaning*, originally published in 1992 as *Donald Davidson and the mirror of meaning: holism, truth, interpretation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 15.

<sup>37</sup> Fisher, P 1998, *Wonder, the rainbow, and the aesthetics of rare experiences*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 25.



contemporary perspective that philosophy begins in the experience of wonder and ‘the poetics’ of the intellectual reasoning that follow the experience.<sup>38</sup> And the American philosopher Mary-Jane Rubenstein in *Strange Wonder: The Closure of Metaphysics and the Opening of Awe* (2011) agrees, casting back to ancient Greece and the philosopher Socrates who was among the first to believe that philosophy began in the experience of wonder, ‘...and nowhere else.’<sup>39</sup>

If I focus on wonder the question then arises, is it possible to examine the experience of wonder and then trace the after – the intellectual process resulting directly from the physical experience of wonder – in an attempt to explain it to others and to oneself? This is a process Fisher describes as, ‘...an ongoing fragile project of making sense...’<sup>40</sup> Alice experiences a fictional land called *Wonderland*, where everything is extraordinary and the extraordinary becomes the ordinary. In common language it is not unusual to say, as Alice does, ‘I wonder what that is’ or ‘I wonder why’ in relation to something that is not immediately understood or discerned. Ideally what follows is a thought process to understand the event or object. Fisher defines wonder as, ‘...a sudden experience of an extraordinary object that produces delight...’ leading in turn to reflection and the pursuit of knowledge.<sup>41</sup> He also invokes the philosopher René Descartes, saying Descartes, ‘...placed wonder first among the passions because he believed it to be the origin of intellectual life. To notice a phenomenon, to pause in thought before it, and link it by explanation into the fabric of the ordinary: this is the essence of science in the widest meaning of the term.’<sup>42</sup> Wonder and learning, Fisher says, ‘...are tied by three things: by suddenness, by the moment of first seeing, and by the visual presence of the whole state or object...’<sup>43</sup> It is essential, he claims, that the entire object and all its details must be, ‘...unexpectedly, instantaneously seen for the first time...’<sup>44</sup> This places the phenomenon of wonder in the visual world, encompassing architecture and the visual arts. It follows then that narrative based arts such as theatre, literature, film or music, where the ‘entire object and all its details’ cannot be seen in an instant, can never create this awe-inspiring moment.<sup>45</sup> Fisher also suggests that subsequent experiences of the same object or event may have a lesser effect, the power of the initial experience becoming more commonplace, ordinary, anticipated, and no

<sup>38</sup> Fisher, P 1998, *Wonder, the rainbow, and the aesthetics of rare experiences*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 55.

<sup>39</sup> Rubenstein, M-J 2011, *Strange wonder: the closure of metaphysics and the opening of awe*, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Fisher, P 1998, *Wonder, the rainbow, and the aesthetics of rare experiences*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 8.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

Descartes referred to the six primitive passions – Wonder, Love, Hatred, Desire, Joy, and Sadness.

Descartes, R, Voss, S (translation & annotation) 1989, *The passions of the soul* (1649), Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, Article 69, p. 56.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

longer able to stimulate the pattern of thinking that followed the first experience.<sup>46</sup>

Descartes does not appear to be quite so narrow in his explanation of wonder, although reference to ‘the object’ is made in his work, *The Passions of the Soul* (1649). Descartes declared that after the initial sudden reaction, astonishment follows. This visceral experience of astonishment goads the spectator into a state of thoughtfulness, analysis and learning – principally to examine something previously unknown. The experience of wonder and astonishment, therefore, is not confined to sight or reason because it also inspires a bodily reaction. Descartes described the effect of astonishment in this way, saying it has the:

...power to make the spirits in the cavities of the brain make their way...toward the place where the impression of the object wondered at is...sometimes [it] drives all of them there, and so occupies them in preserving that impression that none of them pass from there to the muscles...This makes the entire body remain immobile like a statue, and renders one incapable of perceiving anything of the object except the face first presented or, consequently, of acquiring a more specific knowledge of it. This is what is commonly called being astonished. And Astonishment is an excess of wonder...<sup>47</sup>

This is reminiscent of Alice and the white rabbit. Alice leapt to her feet, astonished by the rabbit’s use of a watch and was momentarily made immobile, as still as a statue. Alice also experienced a form of ‘blind curiosity’ identified by Descartes. Regaining her mobility with insufficient time to analyse the cause of her astonishment, she ran after the rabbit. ‘Blind curiosity’, according to Descartes, is equivalent to a sickness affecting, ‘...those who investigate rarities only to wonder at them and not to understand them. For they gradually become so given to wonder that things of no importance are...capable of engaging them...’ Whereas the great benefit of wonder and what follows is:

...in making us learn and retain in our memory things we have previously been ignorant of. For we wonder only at what appears as rare and extraordinary to us. And nothing can appear to us except through our having been ignorant of it or through its being different from things we have known, for it is in virtue of this difference that it is called extraordinary.<sup>48</sup>

Malpas in his book *Heidegger and the Thinking of Place* (2012), takes a similar view linking the experience of wonder to placedness – our place within the world. He argues that it is this placedness that underpins wonder:

...I do not treat wonder as *any* experience so called, but rather take wonder to be that

<sup>46</sup> Fisher, P 1998, *Wonder, the rainbow, and the aesthetics of rare experiences*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 18.

<sup>47</sup> Descartes, R, Voss, S (translation & annotations) 1989, *The passions of the soul* (1649), Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, Article 73, p. 58.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., Article 75, p. 59.

particular mode of encounter with the world in which our placedness in the world, and the strangeness of that placedness (or place), becomes the focus for attention.<sup>49</sup>

Malpas sees the possibility that we are both 'in place' and 'out of place' at the moment of experiencing wonder and it is that momentary disconnection that contributes to our recognition of the event, which in itself is the epitome of the ordinary. Wonder, he says, '...is a returning, sometimes with the abruptness of a sudden shock; to the world to which we already belong...'<sup>50</sup> Wonder is 'destabilising', it 'messes things up', 'establishes a new order.'<sup>51</sup> Rubenstein retells the ancient story of the philosopher who is so focused on the skyward search for wonder that he becomes incapable of seeing what lies on the ground before him. If we walk about with our head in the clouds then we are highly likely to trip, and in this way she says, wonder has the capacity to be dangerous:

What is astonishing is that everyday assumption has suddenly become untenable: the familiar has become strange, throwing even the unquestionable into question. Wonder, then, comes on the scene...as a profoundly unsettling pathos...the philosopher's wonder marks his inability to ground in the ordinary as he reaches towards the extraordinary... the skyward reach has rendered uncanny the very ground on which philosophers stand. And because it leaves thinking thus ungrounded, thaumazein [the ancient Greek word for wonder] is not merely uncomfortable; it is downright dangerous.<sup>52</sup>

Wonder leaves the 'philosopher exposed to that which he cannot master.'<sup>53</sup> And like Alice, the viewer or spectator is not the master. Malpas says:

Philosophy may thus begin in wonder, but inasmuch as the demand for explanation constitutes a demand for illumination and transparency, so it can also constitute a blindness to the interdependence between transparency and opacity, and so a blindness to the prior belonging to the world that first drives the demand for explanation.<sup>54</sup>

He goes on to say, 'Philosophy begins in wonder, but it often ends in alienation...'<sup>55</sup>

While there may be many ways to look at wonder my attachment emanates from a zone where there is room for English philosopher, Mary Midgley's notion that *love*, in its broadest meaning, can be an ingredient of the wonder equation. In her book *Wisdom, Information and Wonder* (1995) she says:

<sup>49</sup> Malpas, J 2012, *Heidegger and the thinking of place: explorations in the topology of being*, MIT Press, Cambridge, p. 63.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 266.

<sup>51</sup> Malpas, J 2013, in informal conversation with Greer Honeywill, 20 February.

<sup>52</sup> Rubenstein, M-J 2011, *Strange wonder: the closure of metaphysics and the opening of awe*, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 4.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> Malpas, J 2012, *Heidegger and the thinking of place: explorations in the topology of being*, MIT Press, Cambridge, p. 265.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 265.

...wonder involves love. It is an essential element in wonder that we recognize what we see as something we did not make, cannot fully understand, and acknowledge as containing something greater than ourselves.<sup>56</sup>

Midgley's claim is further amplified by Iris Murdoch in the essay *The Sublime and the Good* (1959) in which she says love, '...is the extremely difficult realisation that something other than oneself is real.'<sup>57</sup> Elaine Scarry, in her Tanner Lectures on Human Values, *On Beauty and Being Just*, (1999) talks about beauty and the initial observance of beauty as being akin to wonder. Just as wonder promotes a pattern of learning or enquiry about something previously unknown, the observance of beauty promotes, 'the act of replication.'<sup>58</sup> Scarry asks:

What is the felt experience of cognition at the moment one stands in the presence of a beautiful boy or flower or bird? It seems to incite, even to require, the act of replication. Wittgenstein says that when the eye sees something beautiful, the hand wants to draw it...Beauty copies itself into being. It makes us draw it, take photographs of it, or describe it to other people.<sup>59</sup>

Has technology already converted us to mindless acts of replication far removed from beauty and wonder? What part is played by the accessibility, for example, of the ubiquitous smartphone camera (the iPhone as I prefer) as the 'eye' to gather and replicate?

In my kitchen on what seemed like 'any Sunday' something made me lift my head to look at an event on the ceiling that had somehow, suddenly, arrested my attention.<sup>60</sup> I wondered what on earth could be causing the captivating, softly moving, ghostly imagery. Reaching for the video function of my iPhone I made three short videos. My actions were urgent because the image seemed to fade away to a dull grey patch and then, when hope of return seemed unlikely, the image would return, although in minutes it disappeared entirely. While holding the iPhone aloft there was time to consider what was happening. On closer inspection this was not a cloud form, as it initially appeared, rather it was a complex reversed reflection of droplets of water falling into a pool projected from outside the kitchen window onto the ceiling inside. How was this happening? Outside, the sky was populated with fast moving clouds that momentarily obscured and revealed the sun. It had been raining – a gentle, quiet rain – enough to accumulate in crevices, such as an imperfect depression in a piece of newly laid concrete. The concreting was not particularly well finished. Instead of a smooth, flat surface the work seemed to be punctuated with uneven sections. In this case a circular, shallow, depression that lined up with

<sup>56</sup> Midgley, M 1995, *Wisdom, information and wonder*, Routledge, London, p. 41.

<sup>57</sup> Murdoch, I 1959, 'The sublime and the good', *Chicago Review*, vol. 13, no. 3, p. 51.

<sup>58</sup> Scarry, E 1999, *On beauty and being just*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> The discovery of this moment of beauty took place on Sunday 26 August 2012 at approximately 9.15am.

where I was sitting with my back to the sun and the window. Droplets of water were archived briefly in the Wisteria around the kitchen window and from time to time a droplet would fall into the shallow pool below, creating ripples. Reflectivity caused the complete image to be projected (or mirrored) as the sharp light of the northern sun hit the pool of water at exactly the right angle and transmitted the whole through the kitchen window onto the ceiling in reverse. It was an extraordinary event that required sun, moving clouds, light rain, a dripping plant, imperfect concrete and someone, sitting in exactly the right place to have the image projected back from the ceiling onto the lens of a receptive eye. And (as a finale) that ‘someone’ at the table equipped with the essential smartphone to capture and replicate the event. Philip Fisher offers an explanation:

One part of knowing that there is a triangular relation requires joining in the same visual space two things that cannot be in a visual field, but, then, to supply the third we have to – in imagination – step back from the visual altogether and no longer look at the visual field, but imagine ourselves seeing it.<sup>61</sup>

Having generally (rather than technically) come to grips with the elements of this event I then did precisely what Scarry would have predicted – I instinctively reached for a means of replicating the event, to keep the beauty present, to stave off its inevitable loss by archiving it as a form of memory. This tool was my alternative eye – my *ever present eye* – one that could be relied upon to create a replica that I could return to repeatedly. My replica was a sixty-second video. This exquisitely small and fleeting event could so easily have been missed and true to Hobart’s ever changing weather the blue quickly faded from the sky and the clouds began to slow and block the sun altogether. The moment of wonder had passed, lost forever in its original form. The next day slate was laid over the concrete base and the imperfection that enabled the tiny, wondrous event was entombed forever. This ordinary event perfectly illustrated the concept of wonder, astonishment and the intellectual curiosity that follows them.

Six months later I was astonished by an even brighter, more active version of reflectivity. In the act of leaving the house I noticed above my head a frenetic, monotone dance played out on the ceiling of the verandah. After a few moments I realized similar ingredients were at play. A breeze playing with the surface of water held in a bucket and the sun-powered projection of this phenomenon onto the first opaque material to interrupt the transmission – the verandah ceiling. A month later I encountered a third event. This time the event was projected onto an internal wall. I was now building a small collection of astonishing, ephemeral events, each captured in the act and replicated as small iPhone videos allowing me to simultaneously extend

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<sup>61</sup> Fisher, P 1998, *Wonder, the rainbow, and the aesthetics of rare experiences*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 123.

the moment and create an archive of memory. This act of capture and replication as means of staving off the death of the memory of these small and wondrous events is reminiscent of the events depicted in Christian Boltanski's (1945- ) subscription film project, *Storage Memory*.<sup>62</sup> Writer, Siri Hustvedt in *Living, Thinking, Looking* (2012) says,

...the machine (the camera) fixes what it sees and lures the viewer into feeling that the static image or the bit of moving film is an avenue for retrieval, a way to get the thing or person back. Every photographic subject becomes a sign of disappearance because it belongs to the past...<sup>63</sup>

Perhaps if I were a poet I could write as English writer and poet, Philip Larkin has done in the name of preserving the moment:

I write poems to preserve things I have seen/thought/felt...both for myself and for others, though I feel my primary responsibility is the experience itself, which I am trying to keep from oblivion for its own sake. Why I should do this I have no idea, though I think the impulse to preserve lies at the bottom of all art.<sup>64</sup>

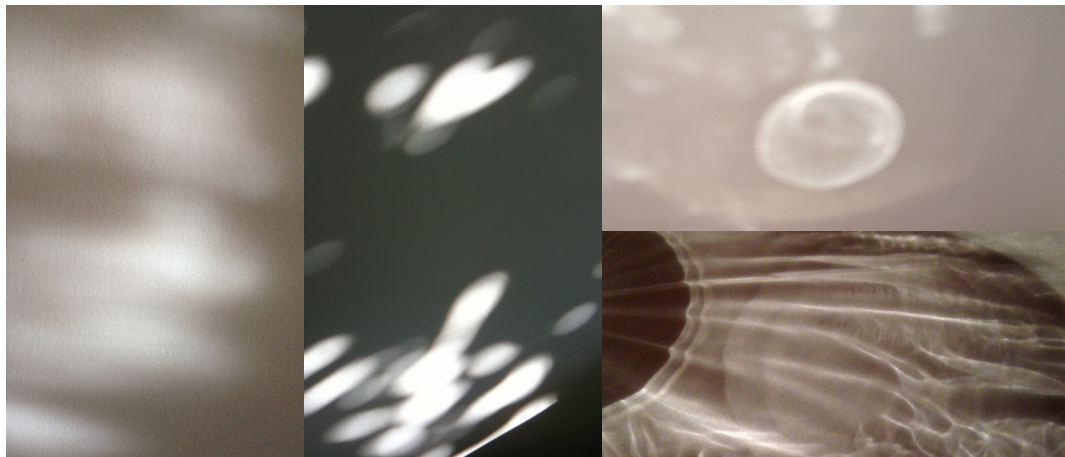


PLATE 1 IMAGES 1 - 4

Greer Honeywill, *Ephemerata* #4, #6, #3, #7, 2012-2013  
Stills from iPhone video footage

As I captured my domestic wonders with my iPhone I was performing the act of gathering in the tradition of both Rosalie Gascoigne (1917-1999)<sup>65</sup> and Christian Boltanski and the way I have, for decades, gathered narratives, memories, detritus and objects into artworks. I called these small, everyday replicas, the *Ephemerata* videos, each captured by the video function of

<sup>62</sup> Christian Boltanski's on-going internet subscription artwork *Storage Memory* (2012- ), is discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>63</sup> Hustvedt, S 2012, *Living, thinking, looking*, Sceptre, London, p. 225.

<sup>64</sup> Appleyard, B 1990, *The pleasures of peace*, Faber and Faber, London, p. 101.

<sup>65</sup> Rosalie Gascoigne (1917-1999) NZ/Australian artist whose assemblages and installations of discarded everyday objects gathered from roadsides and farm paddocks communicate her view of the landscape especially the landscape of Canberra and the Wimmera. In 1982 she represented Australia at the Venice Biennale.



my iPhone. A natural event captured and made present and repeatable by what is now everyday technology.<sup>66</sup>

In his book, *The Gift*, (1991) Vladimir Nabokov plays with the idea of wonder. Fyodor, the hero, is moving into new accommodation:

As he crossed toward the pharmacy at the corner he involuntarily turned his head because of a burst of light that has ricocheted from his temple, and saw, with that quick smile with which we greet a rainbow or a rose, a blindingly white parallelogram of sky being unloaded from the van – a dresser with mirror across which, as across a cinema screen, passed a flawlessly clear reflection of boughs sliding and swaying not arboreally, but with human vacillation, produced by the nature of those who were carrying this sky, these boughs, this gliding façade. He walked on towards the shop, but what he had just seen... had taken him unawares and...released in him that pleasant something...<sup>67</sup>

Philip Fisher cites this passage from Nabokov's novel as incorporating many aspects of wonder. The component parts of the event experienced by Fyodor occur, he says, '...within the ordinary and the everyday, and once explained it is itself part of that everyday...'<sup>68</sup> Everyday – like the action of droplets of water intermittently falling into a pool of water outside a kitchen window. An event magically transmitted by the sun onto the ceiling of a kitchen and then projected back onto the lens of an eye. Fisher refers to such events as, '...accidental and extremely short-lived moments of beauty...that...will never happen again...quirky moment[s], mine alone.'<sup>69</sup> He goes on to further explain Fyodor's vision as,

...nothing but banal household furnishings, a dresser with mirror. Yet everyday has been shuffled and displaced. The sky is down here, coming out of a van. For Nabokov the explanation does not deflate the wondrous...In the end we replace the first delighted smile by a return to mysterious pleasure dependent on leaving out, in the final phrase, the word reflection. The hero forgets, or rather is so taken by the literal event in front of him that he reports only what he sees – men carrying 'this sky, these boughs, this glittering façade'.<sup>70</sup>

It is from this passage that I derived the themes for this research – wonder, walking, the mirror and the act of replication. In the next chapter I look further at the mystery and magic of fleeting reflections of the everyday.

<sup>66</sup> I 'found' the last of these events, or what Philip Fisher would describe as 'accidental, short-lived, moments of beauty,' in June 2013 bringing my collection to seven over a period of ten months. But much has changed. The temporary concrete path is now slated, the bucket has gone from the back door because there is no dog and the new neighbours have severely trimmed their garden. At this point (August 2014) I wonder if I will find or recognise another such moment.

<sup>67</sup> Nabokov, V, Scammell, S (translation) 1991, *The gift* (1963), Vintage International Books, New York, p. 6.

<sup>68</sup> Fisher, P 1998, *Wonder, the rainbow, and the aesthetics of rare experiences*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 25.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

# 02

## 02 Reflection and Replication

As a small boy whenever I saw myself reflected in a large mirror I felt all the horror of the raff-like doubling or multiplication of reality. Mirrors, with their never failing mimicry, their pursuit of each of my movements, their pantomime of the world, seemed eery to me.

– JORGE LUIS BORGES<sup>71</sup>

The description of the random, wonder-inducing event in Nabokov's *The Gift*, involving an out-of-place mirror, led to the consideration of reflective surfaces and their ability to reveal, distort and confound. In her essay for the exhibition *Mirror Mirror*, 2009-2010, curator Anne Stephen, discusses *Mirror Square II*, 1979, by Robert Smithson (1938-1973) saying:

A tension exists as much between the mirrors and the sightlessness they induce as between the natural materials and their displacement from site. Smithson liked to quote Jorge Luis Borges, who incidentally was mirror-phobic, because he shared the desire 'to design that ungraspable architecture.'<sup>72</sup>

Andrew McNamara in his essay for the same exhibition catalogue says mirrors, '...are emphatically objects of seeing. Like cameras, mirrors are apparatuses of perception – they stage seeing – but more often than not they are viewed as automatic devices, a mere vehicle, something to be 'seen through.'<sup>73</sup>

<sup>71</sup> *Profile of a Writer: Borges and I* 1983, film, Arena (BBC Four). Directed by David Wheatley, viewed 15 November 2013, <[http://www.ubuweb.com/fil/borges\\_portrait.html](http://www.ubuweb.com/fil/borges_portrait.html)>.

<sup>72</sup> Stephen, A (curator), Broadfoot, K & McNamara, A (essays) 2009, *Mirror mirror: then and now*, exhibition catalogue, touring exhibition, 24 October-12 December 2009, Institute of Modern Art, Queensland, AUS, 4 January-2 May 2010, University Art Gallery, University of Sydney, AUS, 14 May -16 July 2010, Samstag Museum of Art, Adelaide, AUS, p. 7.

Stephen is quoting Robert Hobbs from his catalogue, *Robert Smithson: A Retrospective View*, p. 33.

<sup>73</sup> Stephen, A (curator), Broadfoot, K & McNamara, A (essays) 2009, *Mirror mirror: then and now*, exhibition catalogue, touring exhibition, 24 October-12 December 2009, Institute of Modern Art, Queensland, AUS, 4 January-2 May 2010, University Art Gallery, University of Sydney, AUS, 14 May -16 July 2010, Samstag Museum of Art, Adelaide, AUS, p. 25.



In *The World at a Glance* (2007), philosopher, Edward Casey talks about, ‘the intimate tie between the glance and the sudden and surprising.’<sup>74</sup> The magic of astonishing moments, moments blinked into existence, frequently coupled with the human desire to archive or replicate these moments of beauty. In this chapter I discuss the work of four artists, works experienced, first hand. In each case the artist has utilised the ambiguous and dazzling qualities of reflective surfaces to great effect. Recall, as discussed in the Introduction, that it has been a priority within this research project to reference primary sources in terms of artworks: artworks researched, sought out, and experienced first hand in Australia, England, Italy, France, and the USA, rather than artworks viewed only as photographs incapable of providing the full experience. And recall Philip Fisher’s view that it is essential that the entire object and all its details are, ‘...unexpectedly, instantaneously seen for the first time...’<sup>75</sup> for there to be the possibility of wonder. It is important, where large-scale installations are involved, to maintain Fisher’s view in order to fully experience such works and perhaps, if one is fortunate enough, to experience wonder. The particular works are Gerhard Richter’s, *6 Panes of Glass in a Rack*, 2002-2011, Daniel Buren’s massive installation, *Excentrique(s), travail in situ*, for Monumenta 2012, Buren’s *Écho d’échos: Vues plongeantes, travail in situ*, permanently installed in the roof space of the Centre Pompidou-Metz (north-eastern France) and the collaborative work by artist Ai Weiwei with architects Herzog & de Meuron in the form of the 2012 Serpentine Pavilion, London. And, finally, an ongoing work (until death) by Christian Boltanski that focuses on the replication of short-lived moments of lived experience often (in my year-long experience of the work) relating to reflective surfaces. These small-scale moments are replicated for dissemination to a receptive on-line subscription audience across the world. These mirror reflective works demonstrate Casey’s point, the tie between the glance, the sudden and the surprising. The wonder inducing moment exciting in the spectator a desire to attempt to capture the experience in order to hold on to it past the flash of cognition located by the glance and the accompanying immediate visceral experience. Casey says:

A photograph gains its full haunting power from the fact that its image is continually recoverable. Even if we never re-perceive a given physical photograph, we know that its imagistic-pictorial content is available in an album or an archive, a book or a museum: each of us *maintains* it as perceptible for ourselves and others. Wherever we are the image is *there*, supported by an appropriate material thing to which [...] we can gain access in principle.<sup>76</sup>

In the now, the present, the photograph is captured, most frequently, by the *ever present eye* (the iPhone or smart phone camera) in the manner Elaine Scarry, in the previous chapter, predicts.

<sup>74</sup> Casey, ES 2007, *The world at a glance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p. 215.

<sup>75</sup> Fisher, P 1998, *Wonder, the rainbow, and the aesthetics of rare experiences*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 17.

<sup>76</sup> Casey, ES 2007, *The world at a glance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p. 398.

While the image and the experience lingers it can only be held in the memory of the beholder until it eventually fades. In principle the photograph is more tangible, reliable and recoverable than memory.

Nabokov drew our attention to the ordinary shop in the high street. Ben Nicholson (1894-1982), the British painter, found an ordinary shop window to be a beckoning site where he experienced an, ‘accidental and extremely short-lived unique moment...’<sup>77</sup> Jeremy Lewison in his book *Ben Nicholson*, (1991), talks about the artist’s experience outside a shoe shop in Dieppe, France, called *Au Chat Botté*, or translated into English, *Puss in Boots*. The painter was travelling with the artist, Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975) at the time and as he looked into the window of the shop he experienced a moment of wonder. The subsequent painting titled *Au Chat Botté*, 1932, encapsulating his experience on that ordinary day was to become a seminal work for Nicholson, although at the time he was not aware of just how significant it would become. For the painter the work ushered in an entirely new approach to the organization of space within the rectangle. Lewison maintains it was the red painted sign on the shop window that initially attracted Nicholson’s attention and when the artist moved to look more closely he was excited by the sudden event that took hold of him.<sup>78</sup> The author quotes Nicholson as saying:

...what was important was that the name was printed in very lovely red lettering on the glass window – giving one plane – and in this window were reflections of what was behind me as I looked in giving a second plane – while through the window objects on the table were performing a kind of ballet and forming the ‘eye’ or life-point of the painting – giving a third plane. These three planes and all their subsidiary planes were interchangeable so that you could not tell which was real and which unreal, what was reflected and what was unreflected, and this created, as I see now, some kind of space or imaginative world in which one could live.<sup>79</sup>

Lewison goes on to talk about particular aspects of the painting, *Au Chat Botté*:

The head in the painting is that of Hepworth reflected in the window but it appears to be resting on the table. The jug in the foreground, which could only be inside the shop, appears to be outside since its contours obscure some of the lettering. A *pentimento* displaying a guitar at the bottom right adds an element of mystery to this painting of drifting objects.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Fisher, P 1998, *Wonder, the rainbow, and the aesthetics of rare experiences*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 25.

<sup>78</sup> Lewison, J 1991, *Ben Nicholson*, Phaidon Press, Oxford, p. 13.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

The author is quoting Ben Nicholson, in Nicholson, B 1941, ‘Notes on abstract art’, *Horizon*, vol. 4.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.



PLATE 2 IMAGE 5

Ben Nicholson, *Au Chat Botté*, 1932, oil and pencil on canvas, 92.5 x 122cm

Photographer unknown

Seventy-seven years after the painting of *Au Chat Botté* I experienced, first hand, what Nicholson was talking about as I installed a mixed media work, *Laughter Forbidden*, in a shop window in Lorne, Victoria. The same factors that Nicholson experienced were evident in this site. However, instead of red text on the window, the Lorne Pharmacy displayed neat, black, sans serif text. Elements of my work would sit somewhere between the window text and a new 'wall' created by a text-filled curtain. It was my intention to create interplay between the existing text on the pharmacy window and the introduced text. For this task 'Stencil' was chosen, a typeface favoured by the Irish designer Eileen Gray (1878-1976). The subject matter of this work and the title were derived from Eileen Gray's icon of modernity, E1027, the coastal house she designed with Jean Badovici between 1926 and 1929. Throughout Gray's house various words and phrases were stencilled directly onto the walls as they were on ocean liners of the time. One such ironic stencilling was *rire interdit* (laughter forbidden).<sup>81</sup> The words were not a warning to guests rather they an invitation to laugh as much as possible. Gray was referencing Voltaire<sup>82</sup>, the Enlightenment writer, historian and philosopher, who believed the only way to exist was to 'laugh at everything' as he demonstrated in his satirical novel *Candide* (1759).<sup>83</sup>

In daylight hours the Lorne Pharmacy window reflected the coastal tourist characteristics of the site. The wide unimpeded sky of the esplanade and the ghostly reflections of display

<sup>81</sup> Constant, C 1994, 'E-1027: the non-heroic modernism of Eileen Gray', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 53, no. 3, p. 277.

<sup>82</sup> Voltaire was the nom de plume used by François-Marie Arouet (1694-1778).

<sup>83</sup> Voltaire, May, G (introduction), Morley, H (translation), Walsh, L (revised) 2003, *Candide* (1759), Barnes and Noble Classic Series, New York, p. 109.



In the book, *In Search of Lost Time*, (vol. II, 1919), Proust talks about the emotional effect of a beautiful sunrise framed and reflected by the windows of the train in which he was travelling:

I was lamenting the loss of my strip of pink sky when I caught sight of it anew, but red this time, in the opposite window which it left at a second bend in the line; so that I spent my time running from one window to the other to reassemble, to collect on a single canvas the intermittent, antipodean fragments of my fine, scarlet, ever-changing morning, and to obtain a comprehensive view and a continuous picture of it.<sup>84</sup>

Reflections and reflective surfaces became increasingly important as a focus within this research project and as a means of exploring various forms of *eye*, the watcher and the watched and me...the 'I'. On the subject of the mirror Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) in his notebooks wrote about the endlessness of reflection:

...if two mirrors be placed so as to exactly face each other, the first will be reflected in the second and the second in the first...and so it continues from image to image on to infinity, in such a way that each mirror has an infinite number of mirrors within it, each smaller than the last, and one inside another.<sup>85</sup>

As opportunities arose to conduct international research I looked at artists currently working with reflective surfaces exhibiting in London and Paris in 2011 and 2012. My aim was to explore the expressive nature of the reflective surface, its obscurity and openness, the reality and the metaphor and the involvement of the spectator. The first of these works was *6 Panes of Glass in a Rack*, 2002-2011 by Gerhard Richter (1932- ). Richter's solo exhibition, *Peinture*, occupied the Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris, in October 2011. The walls of the gallery were hung with Richter's well-known, multi-coloured, finely striped, paintings and in the centre of the gallery the only sculptural piece functioned as a somewhat deceptive entity. The reflective surfaces of *6 Panes of Glass in a Rack* appeared to gather together both clear and indistinct images of spectators, as if creating a montage. This montage then merged with slivers of colour reflected from the paintings to form a richly layered landscape of colour, shadows and reflections. This was the kind of effect Ben Nicholson experienced outside the shop window proclaiming the appearance of the magical landscape of layers as the, '...kind of space or imaginative world in which one could live.'<sup>86</sup> As I left the gallery I looked back – there was now nobody in the gallery and it was as if *6 Panes of Glass in a Rack* was waiting patiently for the next spectator and the next spectatorial performance – the colour somehow drained from its surfaces. In June 2012, I saw

<sup>84</sup> Proust, M, Scott Moncrieff, CK & Kilmartin, T (translation), Enright, DJ (revised) 1992, *In search of lost time*, vol. II (1919), 'Within a budding grove: place-names: the place', The Modern Library, New York, p. 317.

<sup>85</sup> Da Vinci, L, MacCurdy, E (introduction & translation) 1955, *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* (circa 1517), George Braziller, New York, p. 987.

<sup>86</sup> Lewison, J 1991, *Ben Nicholson*, Phaidon Press, Oxford, p. 13.

The author is quoting Ben Nicholson, in Nicholson, B 1941, 'Notes on abstract art', *Horizon*, vol. 4.



this work again as part of the Gerhard Richter retrospective, *Panorama*, at Centre Pompidou, Paris. In the configuration of this exhibition the work was set between a window on one side and large paintings, brooding images in dark tones on the other. Intense light from the window washed across one side of the structure while the other seemed to disappear into shadow. Fragments of the outer structure of the building visible through the window became part of the work and spectators seemed to be momentarily relocated, placed at windows overlooking the city of Paris, when they were actually looking at the work or photographing their reflections. Richter has worked with glass since 1967 and since 2002 his interest has intensified. His panes of glass, whether fixed or moveable, act as a window through which to view the world in a wider context, freed from the restraints governing the picture plane and the objectification of the rectangle. Unpredictable refraction and reflection gather the spectator into the work – the spectator looking in and the reflection acting as a kind of resonance or looking back at the spectator. And chance was at play, as the spectator became performer creating ever-changing patterns through the act of perambulation and accidental association with adjacent objects or spectators.<sup>87</sup> This was perhaps the more successful installation of *6 Panes of Glass in a Rack* due in part to the interplay of natural light from the window.



PLATE 5 IMAGES 9 - 10

Gerhard Richter, *6 Panes of Glass in a Rack*, 2002-2011, 'Peinture', Marion Goodman Gallery, Paris  
Photographer unknown

Gerhard Richter, *6 Panes of Glass in a Rack*, 2002-2011, 'Panorama', Centre Pompidou, Paris  
iPhone image Greer Honeywill

The work of French installation artist Daniel Buren (1938- ) for Monumenta 2012, *Excentrique(s)*, travail *in situ*, filled the vast and greedy space of the Grand Palais, Paris. The commissioned work creating for the spectator a thoroughly immersive, experiential, promenade in and out of circular coloured fields, punctuated by acute reflections in looking glass mirrors.

<sup>87</sup> Edamura, T 2010, 'Vitreous demeanour and Gerhard Richter's moving glass', *Wreck*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 13-17.  
*Wreck* is a publication of the Department of Art History, Visual Art & Theory, University of British Columbia.

The spectators looked up at the glass roof of the Grand Palais through a maze of coloured circles and looked down to see the world in reverse with the sky and the dome reflected sharply in mirror pools across which they walked. The entire scene evoking Nabokov's description of the moving men with the dresser and the mirror in his book *The Gift*. This work provided both amazement and pleasure to hundreds of spectators who shared the space with me on June 18<sup>th</sup> as I paraded north to south as the artist wished, along the full length of the building – the spectator as performer in constant dialogue with the work. The internal space of the Grand Palais is so large that this becomes a walking assignment for the spectator. Walking and continually glancing in parallel with the internal architecture, which is, in turn juxtaposed with the installation. Walking to explore the pools of coloured light, the 'city' of transparent coloured circles and walking as a means of passage across the reflective mirrors. The presence of the unseen artist is 'there', constantly goading the spectator into activity. In turn the spectator walks, explores and photographs. Buren referred to the long, narrow, northern entrance as a 'mouse hole' leading to that moment of astonishment when the spectator walks beyond the canopy of transparent colour into the clearing to walk across an inverted world. Buren has been using colour and the reflective qualities of glass in his work since the 1960s referring to the mirror as a 'third eye'<sup>88</sup> – in this case allowing the spectator to see, simultaneously, what is in front and behind or above and below. Buren is no believer in the truth of reflections, commenting that the mirror:

...does not necessarily reflect whatever is there, but may rather show very specific things, those that only mirrors can show. I would even go so far as to say that a mirror never works in a purely mimetic manner, but that it shows something else. In addition, it transforms space and enables the spectators to see more things and in a different way.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Gallais, JM 2012, Monumenta, Daniel Buren, << *Excentrique(s)*>>, work *in situ*, p. 9, viewed January 28, 2013, <<http://agendacom.com/files/7b136ae710b39161d336bf33e314a2ce.pdf>>.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., viewed January 28, 2013, <<http://agendacom.com/files/7b136ae710b39161d336bf33e314a2ce.pdf>>.





PLATE 6 IMAGES 11-14

Daniel Buren, *Excentrique(s), travail in situ*, 2012, Monumenta, Grand Palais, Paris  
 Photographer Stefan Tuchila and iPhone images Ross Honeywill

Today the artist works almost entirely *in situ*. In this way Buren subverts the autonomy of the individual artwork preferring to make works that respond directly to site. This means that the elements of conception, manufacture and display must be realized on site, rendering the work inseparable from its location. This is a method of working that implies the abandonment of the



studio tradition replacing it with a unique, living work that resonates within a particular space and no other, a work that is made extinct at the conclusion of the exhibition. The imperative for the viewing public to see the work while it is 'live' is much greater because the work cannot be exactly replicated in a different location. In his biography the artist uses the phrase 'lives and works *in situ*' as a means of communicating his manner of work.<sup>90</sup>

At the regional Centre Pompidou-Metz, Buren's fascination with reflections can be seen in the monumental work, *Écho d'échos: Vues plongeantes travail in situ*, 2011. The giant mirror surface reflecting the laminated, larch and spruce roof beams, a critical aspect of the museum design by Japanese architect Shigeru Ban (in collaboration with French architect Jean de Gastines). A viewing platform facilitates the experience of the spectator enabling one to look down on Buren's work and the reflective surface looks back reporting 'echo' upon 'echo' of the structural elements of the building in such a way as to immerse, disorientate and overwhelm the spectator.

In another world altogether, Alice addressed her kitten on the subject of mirror reflections:

I'll tell you all my ideas about Looking-glass House. First there's the room you can see through the glass – that's just the same as our drawing room, only things go the other way...then, the books are something like our books, only the words go the wrong way: I know that because I've held up one of our books to the glass, and then they hold up one in the other room.<sup>91</sup>

Water as mirror surface, as Plato said, can also play a critical role in the projection of naturally occurring animated images as it did in my collection of *Ephemerata* video works. However, movement is not always necessary to create an astonishing image. For instance a pool of still water can display the same reflective capabilities as Buren's mirror glass or Alice's mirror in Looking-glass House. Jorge Luis Borges, with his well-known fear of mirrors wrote of the mirror-like surface of still water, in the poem *Mirrors*:

...of gazing even on water that mimics  
The other blue in its depth of sky,  
That at times gleams back the illusory flight  
Of the inverted bird...

...I ask myself what whim of fate  
Made me so fearful of a glancing mirror.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Gallais, JM 2012, Monumenta 2012, Daniel Buren, << *Excentrique(s)*>>, work *in situ*, p. 6, viewed January 28, 2013, <<http://agendacom.com/files/7b136ae710b39161d336bf33e314a2ce.pdf>>.

<sup>91</sup> Carroll, L, Tenniel, J (illustrations), Gardner, M (introduction & notes) 1960, *The annotated Alice: Alice's adventures in wonderland & through the looking glass*, Bramhall House, New York, pp. 180-181.

<sup>92</sup> Borges, JL, Boyer, M & Morland, H (translators), Enguídanos, M (introduction) 1964, *Dreamtigers*, University of Texas Press, Austin, pp. 60-61.

Borges reflective, mirror/water phenomenon was shown to perfection in the 2012 Serpentine Gallery Pavilion, a collaborative undertaking between Beijing based artist Ai Weiwei (1957-) and Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron. Since the year 2000 a temporary Pavilion has been built each summer on the lawns outside the Serpentine Gallery in Kensington Gardens, London, each Pavilion reflecting the genius of the artist and architect behind the design. Pritzker Prize winning architects Peter Zumthor, (Switzerland), Jean Nouvel, (France) Eduardo Souto de Moura (Portugal) and Frank Gehry (USA) and artists such as Olafur Eliasson (Danish-Icelandic, based in Berlin) have all contributed thought provoking, clever and often poetic ideas.

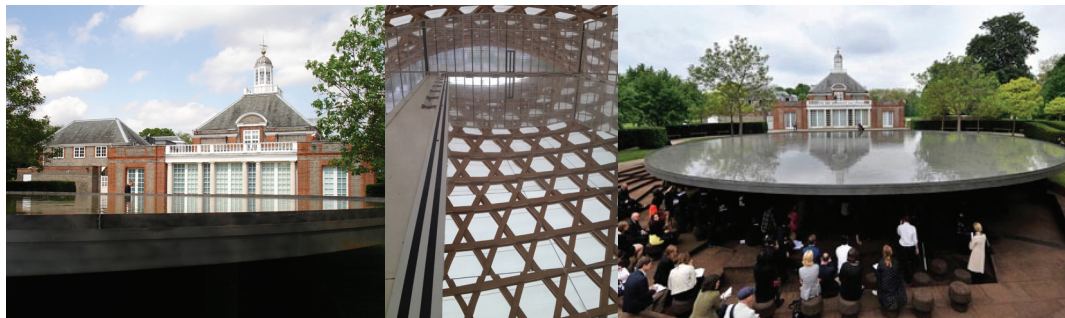


PLATE 7 IMAGE 15-17

Ai Weiwei and Herzog & de Meuron, 2012 Serpentine Pavilion, London, reflections in the 'waterhole'  
iPhone image Greer Honeywill

Daniel Buren, *Écho d'écho: Vues plongeantes, travail in situ*, 2011, Centre Pompidou-Metz  
iPhone image Greer Honeywill

Ai Weiwei and Herzog & de Meuron, 2012 Serpentine Pavilion, London  
Photographer Iwan Baan

Herzog & de Meuron (also Pritzker Prize winners) and Ai Weiwei designed a pavilion that would harness the astonishingly beautiful, reflective qualities of water. To achieve this the team made a conscious decision not to insert an object into the park. Instead they chose to explore the ground beneath the last eleven Pavilions. In their on-site supporting statement they outline the aim:

...to dig down some five feet into the soil of the park until we reach the groundwater. There we dig a waterhole, a kind of well, to collect all of the London rain that falls in the area of the Pavilion. In this way we incorporate an otherwise invisible aspect of reality in the park – the water under the ground – into our Pavilion.<sup>93</sup>

The floating, reflective, 'waterhole' roof of the pavilion mirrored the world and captured within its innocent, watery, gaze the ever-changing sky, the nearby forest of trees, the stately architecture of the Serpentine Gallery and passers-by on land or in the sky (just as Borges would have predicted).

<sup>93</sup> Ai Weiwei and Herzog & de Meuron, 2012, Artist/Architect Statement, Serpentine Gallery Pavilion, London, UK, (Public signage).

While reflections may not necessarily fulfil the definition of wonder they are close relatives, often magical, astonishing, unexplained, unexpected and obscure. Able to stimulate visceral responses and on occasion the question, ‘I wonder what that is?’ While there is undeniable beauty in the randomness of mirror reflections some (like Borges) find the images induce a sense of horror and mimicry – the endlessness of reflection – and the threat to the human soul of capture within and between the layers. The opposite of Ben Nicholson’s fascination with the idea of ‘living between the layers’.

In his Malakoff studio outside Paris, watched by three surveillance cameras, French installation artist Christian Boltanski (1944- ) speculated about replicating beauty, capturing evanescent, everyday moments, and the power of reflective surfaces (often coupled with movement) to simultaneously stimulate and confound the eye. He, like so many artists of the twenty-first century, was searching for a new way of communicating with a viewing audience beyond the limitations of the gallery. His aim was to utilize contemporary tools of dissemination, in particular, the Internet. This thinking was significant because the Internet would free him from traditional, localised audiences predicated on the gallery system and create opportunities for new collectors of his work across the world. His proposition (which was then translated into English by a third party) stated:

In launching this project, Christian Boltanski opens up a new mode of contact with his audience which relies on the resources afforded by Internet. He will communicate with all people, wherever they may be, that would be willing to participate. To all subscribers he will send, each month, ten one-minute original films, making up, with the passage of time, a kind of self-portrait depicting his experiences and emotions, a work in progress of unknown duration which only death will put an end to.<sup>94</sup>

Boltanski called the project, *Storage Memory*, and launched it to the world on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012 looking for 2,000-3,000 subscribers. This was not the first Internet project devised by the artist. During the life of the 2011 Venice Biennale, I participated daily in the free, on-line ‘game’, supporting his work *Chance*. Participants could log on and play for one minute per day. The objective being to click the screen at a critical point where three, non-matched ‘slices’ of a face, synchronise to form a complete portrait.

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<sup>94</sup> Boltanski, C 2012, *Storage Memory*, (2012- ) on-line subscription artwork, viewed 15 February 2012, <<http://www.christian.boltanski.com/eng/2/presentation-oeuvre>>.

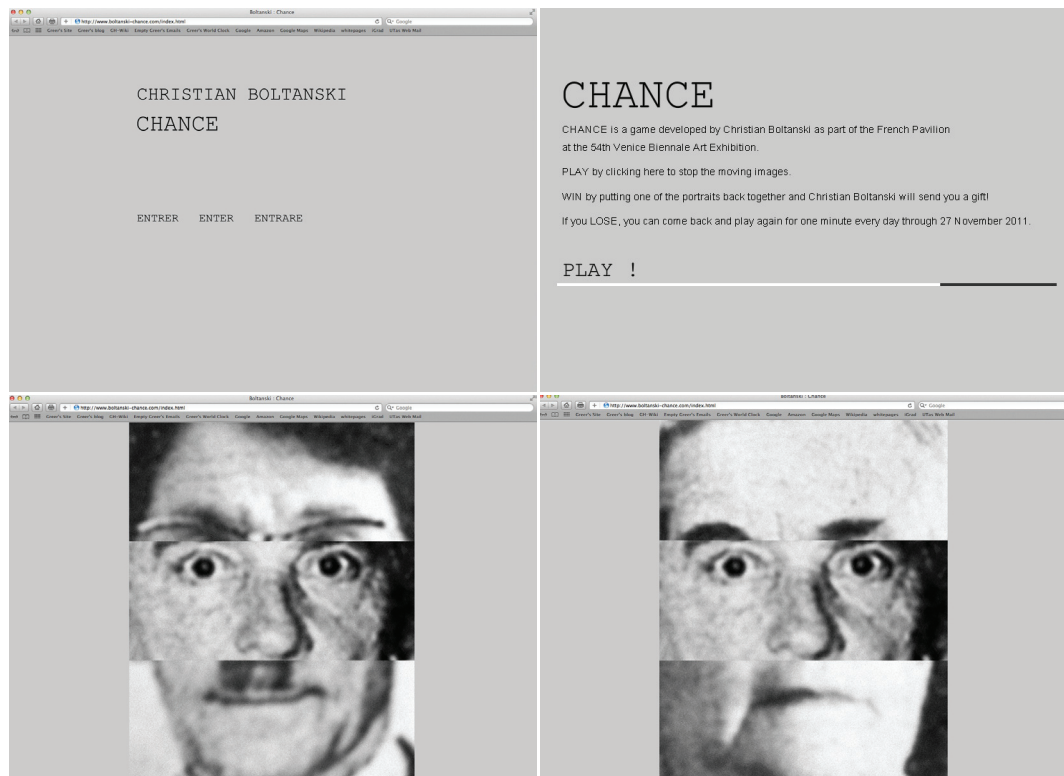


PLATE 8 IMAGES 18-21

Christian Boltanski, *Chance*, 2011  
Screenshots, on-line daily game

*Storage Memory* is structured differently in that all participants must be subscribers. The minimum cost of a subscription is 120 euros (for one year) and in return, the contract states, ten original one-minute films will be sent each month. At the end of the subscription period subscribers are pledged a certificate of 'electronic property' for the complete set of received films. My subscription began on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012, two months after the project commenced, and my first film arrived two days later. From the beginning I did not receive ten films per month and this eventually applied to each of the twelve months of my subscription. The best score was nine films in February 2013 and the worst was two films in December 2012. My last film was received on 22 February 2013 shortly before my subscription was completed. It must be said that in this instance, the correct fulfilment of the contract was not important to me. What was important was the ability to sample the films, to look at the things that captured Boltanski's gaze as he travelled the world, and the manner in which he chose to replicate those moments with his video camera.

Constant movement characterized *Chance*, his major work for the Venice Biennale and movement again characterised the small videos (or films as Boltanski prefers to call them) of *Storage Memory*. Either the camera is in constant slow movement or the object or phenomenon

being filmed is moving. This restlessness creates an abstract quality that compels the viewer to work at the task of identifying what is happening. The artist is quoted as saying in an interview for ART iT, ‘...for me the idea has always been about hiding something – hiding information and having viewers understand that information is there, but hidden.’<sup>95</sup> The films have an anti-expertise quality. Boltanski is making no attempt to be a conventional filmmaker. He is primarily interested in documenting the lived experience, the momentary beauty inherent in the world around him – ordinary occurrences and small details. In this way he is extending the moment that first captured his attention. This archive of lived experience he regards as the central idea of the work. Each film is the equivalent of a glance. The sort of head turning glance we all make when we see something interesting. In *Storage Memory* the result of that glance is captured and preserved. Locked into a sixty second video it is then disseminated across the world. In the act of making his films, Boltanski, the *flâneur*, gathering experiences where and when he can, is also bearing witness. He maintains a loving and attentive eye – perhaps (at times) even an innocent eye on the world as he criss-crosses the globe. In essence, my *Ephemerata* videos share a relationship with the videos made by Boltanski. The short moving image pieces linked by common interests: movement, the mystery and beauty inherent in everyday occurrences and the desire to archive the moments that are constantly drifting from us.

One can chart the activity of Boltanski through the subject matter of *Storage Memory*. Cities, galleries and sites he is visiting as part of his practice are revealed, albeit in obscure ways. Some films are more successful than others. Some are merely perfunctory, an obligation to be met, while others have the power to intrigue. It is clear from the number of films sent that his interest diminished in late 2012 and revived in February 2013. A life-long project is the stated aim. With this fluctuating focus the question is how will he make this project last until he dies? My archive of *Storage Memory* films numbered sixty-seven over the space of a year and my particular interest was predicated on the artist’s playful encounters with reflective surfaces. Confusing reflections such as those created by a revolving glass door, reflections in the rear view mirror of a moving car at night, and the oscillating halo of a shorting light bulb. Sometimes the artist was also inadvertently reflected and sometimes I could hear his voice as incidental sound. In a sense the accidental characteristics of the films and their erratic arrival were reassuring. If I doubted that the artist had made the films then I can hear him at work and sometimes see him. On a day-to-day basis his studio assistants edit the films (if necessary) and run the project. On 6 March 2013, my digital certificate of ownership for the sixty-seven minutes of film arrived. Preparing to show one or two of the films to colleagues on 8 March, I attempted

<sup>95</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, journalist unknown, *ART iT* (Asia), interview with Christian Boltanski, *Storage Memory*, viewed 29 August 2011, <art-it.asia/u/admin\_ed\_feature\_e/t1uqPVvlmHdaM9rjyGon/>.

to open a video only to find access was not permitted. I had paid my money, experienced the films and received a certificate of 'electronic property'. In true Boltanski style, all the films are now hidden from me. As the artist said, he wanted viewers to know 'information is there, but hidden.'<sup>96</sup> There is no access to the films when the contract finishes. I have bought the memory of the films.

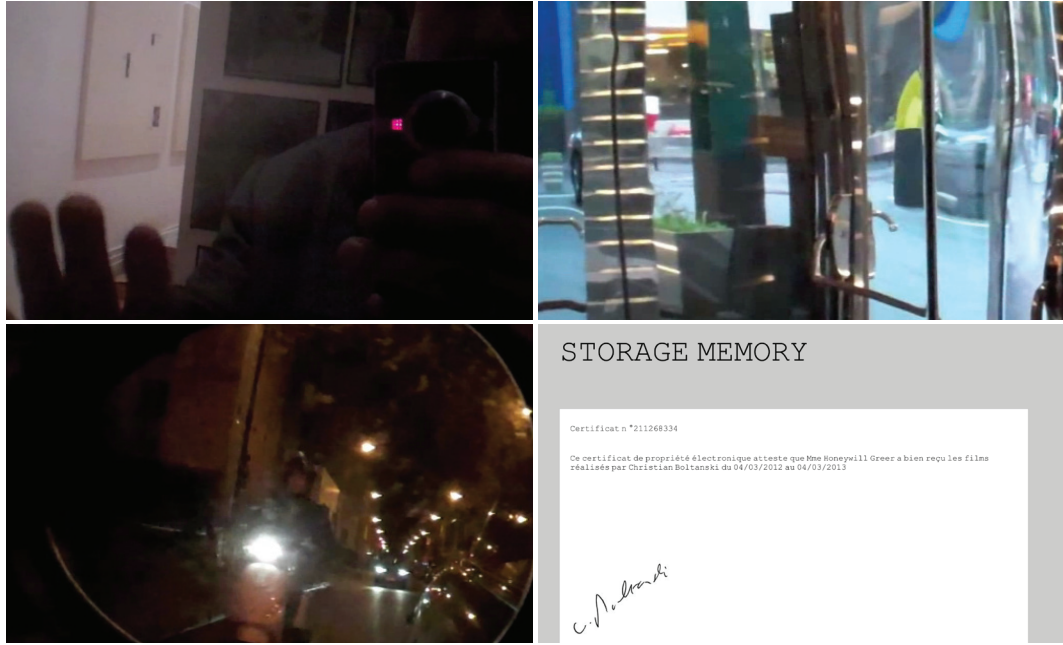


PLATE 9 IMAGES 22-25

Christian Boltanski, *Storage Memory*, 2012-

On-line subscription artwork

Screenshots from single channel digital films received between 2012-2013

Certificate of electronic property, issued 4 March 2013

<sup>96</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, 'Storage Memory', ART iT (Asia), interview, viewed 29 August 2011, <[artit.asia/u/admin\\_ed\\_feature\\_e/t1uqPVvlmHDaM9rjyGon/](http://artit.asia/u/admin_ed_feature_e/t1uqPVvlmHDaM9rjyGon/)>.



# 02

## 03 The Innocent Eye and the Moment

The voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.

– MARCEL PROUST<sup>97</sup>

Recall Nabokov's character was struck by a sudden and unexpected beam of light stimulating wonder as he walked to the pharmacy and Ben Nicholson desired to live within the reflective planes that magically opened up to him as he stood looking through the glass window of an everyday shop front. And I too was struck by the momentary mystery of strange activities transmitted to my kitchen ceiling. The most powerful personal discovery however, was yet to come. This revelation, for which I was completely unprepared, struck me with the sudden impact of a bolt of light. I refer to this discovery, this revelation, as the *innocent eye*. Note my use of the possessive although it must be acknowledged that wider research after the event revealed that this term had been used in different contexts in academic and philosophical texts, often referring to the eye of the child. There is also a wry and popular painting within the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art called *The Innocent Eye Test*, 1981, by Mark Tansey (1949- ) in which the innocent eye is that of a cow.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Proust, M, Scott Moncrieff, CK & Kilmartin, T (translation), Enright, DJ (revised) 1992, *In search of lost time*, vol. VI (1921-1922), 'The captive: the fugitive', The Modern Library, New York, p. 343.

Commonly used reductive translation from the following text. 'A pair of wings, a different respiratory system, which enabled us to travel through space, would in no way help us, for if we visited Mars or Venus while keeping the same senses, they would clothe everything we could see in the same aspect as the things of the Earth. The only true voyage, the only bath in the Fountain of Youth, would be not to visit strange lands but to possess other eyes, to see the universe through the eyes of another, of a hundred others, to see the hundred universes that each of them sees, that each of them is...'

<sup>98</sup> Tansey, M 1981, 'The innocent eye test', in *Recent acquisitions: a selection 1987-1988*, The Metropolitan Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, pp. 68-69.



PLATE 10 IMAGE 26

Mark Tansey, *The Innocent Eye Test*, 1981, oil on canvas, 198.1 x 304.8 cm  
Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, purchased 1988

The *innocent eye* of my focus is neither the eye of the child nor that of the beast; it is instead the epitome of everyday functionality. It is an entity that is capable of serial and repeated image capture and release, an instrument that records momentarily whatever comes within its gaze and then releases the images because it has no way of archiving or remembering what has been captured. My *innocent eye* is incapable of prejudice or judgement operating entirely without human intervention or control. The images it captures are merely accidental, ephemeral and transient. And all of the images collected are in the process of being lost in the very act of ‘recording,’ no matter how exquisite or worthless. Artist Anish Kapoor (1954-) claims there is no such thing as an innocent eye and he repeated this assertion in an interview at the New York Public Library in 2012 saying, ‘...we always look either with envy, with mistrust, with love, with whatever. There’s no open, plain, looking, just looking. We always look with intention.’<sup>99</sup> My *innocent eye* is unable to look with intention because it is nothing more than a reflective medium that once existed as a passive object made of plastic and mirror glass to reflect the world at the whim of the breeze or the fretful pecking of a bird. This *innocent eye* was once cast as entertainment for an imprisoned bird, its magical potential undiscovered until it was old, discarded, dirty and purposeless.

A strange confluence of circumstance occurred at a time when I began to think about the act of constant looking and surveillance and what that might mean in both an aesthetic and societal sense. While thinking about the ‘eye’ of the surveillance camera and actions related to watching, gathering and the archiving of information, a number of derelict, domestic birdcages

<sup>99</sup> Holdengräber, P 2011, in conversation with Brian Eno, Anish Kapoor & Peter Sellars, *Live*, New York Public Library, viewed 11 February 2011, <[http://www.nypl.org/sites/default/.../liveenokapoorsellars\\_11.13transcript.d...](http://www.nypl.org/sites/default/.../liveenokapoorsellars_11.13transcript.d...)>.



were delivered to my house. Between 2004 and 2011 birdcages had been gathered into ever changing, site-specific installations, performed either in galleries or in the landscape. From experience I found that gathering birdcages is cyclic. Occasionally there is an unexplainable generosity to choose from and at other times a complete absence. On this basis I accepted birdcages at all times. The second hand cages gradually piled up outside the kitchen window where they were quite visible. Normally I strip the interior of the cages as they arrive removing the base and any attachments reducing the cage to its metal skeleton. On this occasion the cages lingered far longer than they should and I began watching the movement of a tiny, derelict, four-sided, mirror toy. Initially movement was indicative of changes in wind strength and then the mesmeric effect of staring at something that gently moved with the breeze took hold. The movement was beautiful and I responded by doing what Scarry documented as the initial reaction to beauty – I was staring. Scarry explains that the simplest form of replicating beauty is staring in order to translate, ‘...the glimpsed image’ into an extended moment, to watch for, ‘...five seconds, twenty-five seconds, forty-five seconds...’<sup>100</sup> or as long as the phenomenon lasts.

On a perfectly ordinary day my gaze moved suddenly, unexpectedly, from the object itself to the actual images captured on the miniature mirrors on this four-sided object. This was the revelation, the moment of wonder when I would suddenly ‘see’ the images for the first time and be struck by their extreme beauty. The toy was no longer a moving object, it was an *eye* and in the restless action of turning, capturing and releasing – reflection, repetition and seriality were also at play. Proust talks about a sudden encounter with beauty. He sees a girl serving coffee and milk at a train station and he experiences a rush of happiness that he says accompanies ‘novelty’, difference and beauty:

I could not take my eyes from her face which grew larger as she approached, like the sun which it was somehow possible to stare at and which was coming nearer and nearer, letting itself be seen at close quarters, dazzling you with its blaze of red and gold ... but the doors were being closed and the train had begun to move...I saw her leave the station...my desire to see her again was above all a mental desire not to allow this state of excitement to perish utterly...<sup>101</sup>

According to Scarry, ‘Proust makes a version of this claim over and over again. Beauty quickens. It adrenalizes. It makes the heart beat faster. It makes life more vivid, animated, living, worth living.’<sup>102</sup> I thought about the mirror toy, its revelation and the elation – the absolute excitement of the discovery. Like Proust and Scarry I wanted to extend the moment, to prevent the moment

<sup>100</sup> Scarry, E 1999, *On beauty and being just*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, p. 5.

<sup>101</sup> Proust, M, Scott Moncrieff, CK & Kilmartin, T (translation), Enright, DJ (revised) 1992, *In search of lost time*, vol. II (1919), ‘Within a budding grove: place-names: the place’, The Modern Library, New York, pp. 318-320.

<sup>102</sup> Scarry, E 1999, *On beauty and being just*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, pp. 24-25.

from perishing. In his book, *The Innocent Eye* (1984), Roger Shattuck says,

...the world of appearance is evanescent and deceptive. One must penetrate behind this transitory spectacle in order to reach a universe of forms, ideas, enduring entities, the grand design.<sup>103</sup>

In moving beyond the experience of wonder and into the realm of intellectual curiosity the event was juxtaposed with ideas about replication, capture and dissemination, and art making privileging the everyday. The focused, mechanical and electronic nature of surveillance cameras, set against the chance discovery of a naturally occurring or ephemeral phenomenon that reflected life with unknowing innocence and blank watchfulness. Unlike the surveillance camera or the manipulated eye of the camera, only a breeze was necessary to facilitate the *innocent eye* of my birdcage toy and its film-like spectrum of revelation, capture and release, repeated until such time as the breeze changed or disappeared. No mechanics, no technology and no power necessary. It is the opposite of the 'knowing' technologies driven or controlled by humans and it cannot view the world, as Anish Kapoor would have it, through the envelopes of envy, mistrust or even love.

Wonder and curiosity had for me, established a new order. It had driven me to a new medium, the moving image, for me an untried and unsafe, territory. Roger Scruton says the, '...best place to begin the exploration of everyday beauty is in the garden, where leisure, learning and beauty come together...' <sup>104</sup> He could not have been more instructive. Using the eye of the video camera to capture and replicate the ever-changing, fragmentary world that appeared on the tiny mirror surfaces, five short videos were created. Each recorded in my garden on a single perfect day with a light breeze. The original mirror toy was used along with four others set free from their derelict cages. Each mirror had its own particular shape and coloured frame which influenced the individual outcomes. Shattuck talks about the importance of the fragment:

More than any other art, film has exploited the fragment...Eisenstein referred to cinema as 'fragments standing in a row', and all his writings about montage insist on a dialectic of fragmentary shots played against each other. The sense of the fragment has bestowed a new openness of form on the arts which combines a refusal of traditional orders, deliberate ambivalence of meaning, acceptance of obscurity, comic playfulness, and deep self irony. Thus the fragment, which would first appear to be a mode of anti-structure, itself shapes the way we perceive the world and recast it into works of art.<sup>105</sup>

As the toy rotated on its chain in the empty cage it evoked a silent soundscape, an absent soundscape, tinged with the memory of the original inhabitant. If this atmosphere of absence

<sup>103</sup> Shattuck, R 1984, *The innocent eye: on modern literature & the arts*, Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, p. 238.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

was to be made present what form would an aural landscape take?

Curiosity and the desire to experiment led me to explore a number of possibilities including an aleatoric sound component with Los Angeles based vocalist and composer Moira Smiley who I met by chance in Hobart in 2011. Upon meeting we formed an immediate desire to collaborate and the imagining of the sounds of the mirror toy 'choir' emerged as a prime project. Together we agreed the sound experiment would become a mapping of the random movements, of the toys within each of the five videos. And just as John Cage used the I-Ching to create chance operations or maintain the aleatoric process in his work, *Music of Changes* (1951), Moira Smiley, Inga Swearingen and April Guthrie would also use the I-Ching to map a landscape of vocalisations and imagined sounds patterned against the set of visual rules devised by Moira and me.

*Arcadia*, the work arising from this experimentation, was performed within a solo exhibition titled *Veiled*, at the Bayside Arts & Cultural Centre, Brighton, Victoria, in 2012. The physical aspects of *Arcadia* occupied six metres of a nine metre long wall within the gallery, while sound emanated from a sophisticated surround sound system installed within the gallery ceiling. The five videos played continuously on iPads overlaid with a multiplicity of shadows created by a screen of deconstructed and smashed birdcages. This deconstructed screen of birdcage detritus formed an ephemeral, dissolving, architectural landscape and a rich metaphor for the emotional tension that exists between concepts of freedom and containment, capture and release, private and public. Its series of apertures or windows framing the oscillating effect of 'looking in' as opposed to 'looking out' or being 'looked at'. Writing on René Magritte, Roger Shattuck says, 'the fantastic...bestows a freedom of vision both to see and not to see, to oscillate between the outer eye which registers and the inner eye which beholds.'<sup>106</sup>

There were many discoveries in the making of this work and academic, art critic and author Mel Gooding seems to encapsulate the journey to the completion of *Arcadia* when he says,

...to find meaning in the flux, to structure coherences, to express a truth about the underlying pattern of things, and to discover resemblances between them. This creative transformation of the actual into image, of experience into sign, symbol and metaphor, is effected by the workings of intuitive intelligence, the exercise of the informing intelligence. What is *real* is what we make of what exists, as we encounter it, in the act of recognition, the knowing of something in such a way that we may know it again.<sup>107</sup>

*Arcadia* was an exemplar of the effect of wonder. The work stimulating an invisible chain linking the history and evolution of past birdcage works, the discovery of the fragmentary

<sup>106</sup> Scruton, R 2011, *Beauty: a very short introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 286.

<sup>107</sup> Gooding, M, Furlong, W (interviews) 2002, *Song of the earth*, Thames and Hudson, London, pp. 14-16.

world of the *innocent eye*, my response to a sophisticated exhibition site, the challenge and possibilities offered by technology and the chance to form an international collaboration. The work also brought together three of the themes underlying this research project – wonder, mirror reflection and replication. *Arcadia* was not only a significant experimental work it was also a work that captured the everyday lived experience as art. In exploring earthly notions of ‘arcadia’ Mel Gooding quotes Guiseppe Penone (1947- ), renowned member of the Arte Povera movement, who said, ‘Arcadia...is a notion, a mental space that has haunted man ever since the day that organized physical labour became part of daily routine...It is a space for reflection, not a real space.’ For Penone, ‘Arcadias...are of the mind and imagination.’<sup>108</sup>

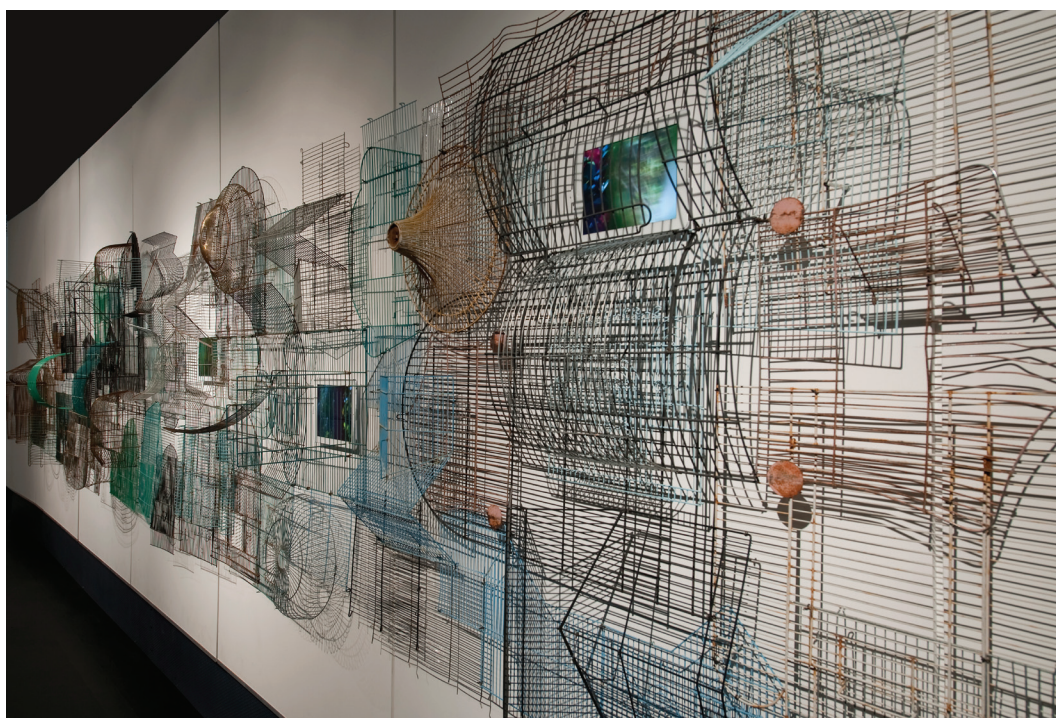


PLATE 11 IMAGE 27

Greer Honeywill, *Arcadia*, 2011- , (detail), mixed media, 130 x 600 x 30cm  
 ‘Veiled’, solo exhibition, Bayside Arts & Cultural Centre, Melbourne  
 Photograph John Best

Have I wondered too much? Do I suffer from a surfeit of astonishment? Descartes had a remedy for what he called excessive wondering which was, ‘...to acquire knowledge of many things, and to apply oneself to the consideration of all those which may seem rare and unusual.’<sup>109</sup> While the making of *Arcadia* transported me to unexamined places in my imagination and prompted associations, collaboration and experimentation, the decision was made as the body of works developed, to remove the haunting sound component and the architectural

<sup>108</sup> Gooding, M, Furlong, W (interviews) 2002, *Song of the earth*, Thames and Hudson, London, pp. 39-42.

<sup>109</sup> Descartes, R, Voss, S (translation & annotations) 1989, *The passions of the soul* (1649), Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, Article 76, p. 61.



overlay of dismembered birdcages in order to return to the elemental. The remembrance of that unembellished moment of wonder when, with a sudden shock the lost and found of the momentary, miniature garden landscapes were recognised. Using a video camera to capture this phenomenon remains the purest representation of the remembered experience. It is to the videos alone that I return to screen them directly onto the gallery wall in groups of three, four or five depending on the capacity of the exhibition venue. As the images move side-by-side in their contradictory, contrapuntal dance I liberate the spectator to ‘hear’ the movement of the miniature mirrors in their imagination and to create their own associations as the mirrors perform their chance choreography. As Fisher says at the beginning of his book, the power of wonder is that it has the capacity to, ‘...lead us back to reflection on ourselves and on our human powers...’<sup>110</sup>

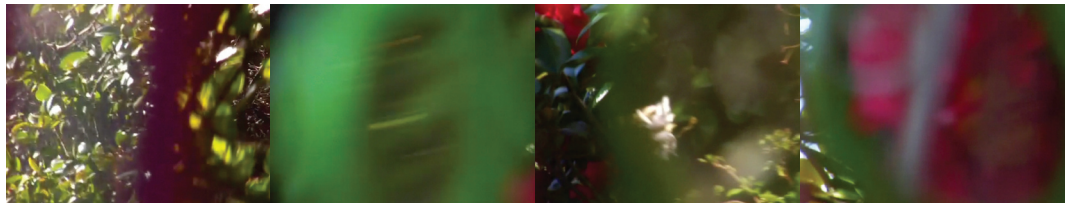


PLATE 12 IMAGE 28

Greer Honeywill, *Arcadia* 2011-2015, video still (four mirror version)

My experience of wonder stimulated by obsessive watching was profound and yet this was a small moment, of the everyday – in the everyday. This domain of the mundane and the ordinary is paradoxically a universe capable of revealing the extraordinary. Malpas, writing of the placement of the experience of wonder in the realm of ‘life’ and the paradox of its ultimate relationship to philosophical enquiry – as the beginning (which he would argue is actually the end), says:

...philosophy does not begin in something out of the ordinary, but in the bringing to awareness of the most ordinary; it does not find its limits in something that transcends our everyday experience, but in the very “being-there” of that experience; it does not find its “end” in a space or time beyond, but only in this place – the place in which it already finds itself, which it never properly leaves, and in which there is always something further to explore.<sup>111</sup>

Wonder can be experienced walking to a shop across an unremarkable street, getting lost in the layers of reflections in a shop window, sitting in the kitchen on an ordinary day or watching the magical dance of a piece of junked detritus. And no playwright captured the ordinary pointed moments of life better than Anton Chekhov. As Scruton poetically details, ‘Chekhov’s

<sup>110</sup> Fisher, P 1998, *Wonder, the rainbow, and the aesthetics of rare experiences*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 1.

<sup>111</sup> Malpas, J 2012, *Heidegger and the thinking of place: explorations in the topology of being*, MIT Press, Cambridge, pp. 266-267.

art captures life as it is lived and distils it into images that contain a drama, as a drop of dew contains the sky.<sup>112</sup> My act of replicating the remembered experience seemed to me to be quite the opposite of the archived capture from a fixed position CCTV (closed circuit television) camera. The cold eye of the CCTV camera is no more than a mindless gatherer however in that gathering of present moments, as we will discover in the next section, a different kind of beauty can be found.

Wonder as a lived experience cannot be archived, cannot be owned or sold, it has no monetary value and yet it is invaluable. While the experience of wonder itself may be astounding, exciting, magical, it is what comes after wonder that makes it so important.

Of all the means of expression, photography is the only one that fixes forever the precise and transitory instant. We photographers deal in things that are continually vanishing, and when they have vanished, there is no contrivance on earth that can make them come back again. We cannot develop a print from memory...

– HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON<sup>113</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Scruton, R 2011, *Beauty: a very short introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 21.

<sup>113</sup> Van Riper, F 2004, 'Creating the Decisive Moment', *The Washington Post*, 16 January 2004, n.p.  
Van Riper is quoting from Henri Cartier-Bresson's 1952 essay, *The Decisive Moment*.

# The Mechanical Eye and the Moment

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03

# 03

## 01 CCTV the Artist and the Archive of Moments: part I

One thing that really irritates me is that a large proportion of art today doesn't talk about life, but instead talks about art...I don't find it interesting...and I see no emotion in that.

– CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI<sup>114</sup>

In the chapters of this section I discuss four works. Each work is a metaphorical mirror and each work has at its heart a gathering of moments, fragments and present instants that relate to life as it is lived. To make each work the eye of the camera has been utilised to gather data that becomes an archive of accumulated moments of ordinary life. There is, however, something else these works have in common. Each work is a quiet confirmation of the collapse of what we once understood as private and public domains. Sandra Phillips, in her catalogue essay for the exhibition, *Exposed: voyeurism, surveillance and the camera*, (2010), says:

As the camera has become more easily concealed, and as we lately have come to feel protected because we are watched, the spy who used to be consigned to the shadows is now tolerated in the open, can in fact be you and me with a cell phone, even as we in turn are observed through the ubiquitous surveillance camera.<sup>115</sup>

Traditional notions of the separation between the private and public domain continue to erode, morphing into a new paradigm that has not yet stabilised. And the watched are frequently in agreement that they should be watched because it makes them feel safer, or as Zygmunt Bauman says, '...perhaps we just consent to the loss of privacy as a reasonable price for the wonders offered in exchange,'<sup>116</sup>

A chance experience of wonder and the discovery of the ephemeral, *mirror-camera* qualities of a reflective birdcage toy (*the innocent eye*) give way in these chapters to an exploration of a different kind of mirror. It was a mirror work that provided the impetus for this research

<sup>114</sup> Grenier, C, Sante, L (foreword) 2009, *The possible life of Christian Boltanski*, MFA Publications, Boston, p. 168.

<sup>115</sup> Phillips, SS (ed.), Baker, S & Brookman, P et al 2010, *Exposed: voyeurism, surveillance and the camera*, exhibition catalogue, 28 May-3 October 2010, Tate Modern, London, UK, p. 11.

<sup>116</sup> Bauman, Z & Lyon, D 2013, *Liquid surveillance: a conversation*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 21.



project and it came in the form of the work *The Life of C.B.* by Christian Boltanski. This ongoing work is a portrait that will take years, possibly decades, to complete. The work builds day by day utilising a gathering of streamed digital data sourced from a trio of fixed position closed circuit television cameras (CCTV) until the artist's death. I do not see the cold, relentless stare of the CCTV camera that populates our streets, public buildings, shopping malls and schools as an innocent eye and yet this mechanical device is incapable of thought. This eye is relentless in its ability to capture what falls within its gaze, a perfect tool for surveillance (watching). The CCTV camera makes a continuous gathering unlike, for example, 35mm film where the fragment is clearly defined and one can cut and separate each frame in the edit process. In the digital stream, is each day a fragment of life or is it each hour, each minute? What constitutes a fragment is not as clearly defined in a data stream. In this chapter and the next I include excerpts from an interview with Christian Boltanski,<sup>117</sup> described by Hans-Ulrich Obrist, co-director of the Serpentine Gallery, London, as one of the most revered, living artists in France. Obrist makes the claim that it was *No Man's Land*,<sup>118</sup> a massive work shown at the Park Avenue Armory, New York, in 2010, that finally cemented the artist's position as 'one of the greatest contemporary French artists.'<sup>119</sup> I also include excerpts from an interview with Nicole Durling, senior curator, Museum of Old and New Art, where the work, *The Life of C.B.* resides as part of the permanent collection.

This entire research project had its genesis in a moment of the everyday – the domain of the breakfast table resplendent with newspapers. My curiosity was aroused when I read a story that appeared in *The Mercury*, a daily newspaper published in Hobart, Tasmania. The headline read, 'Walsh puts his money on life as art'.<sup>120</sup> Coincidentally I was holidaying in Tasmania in January 2010 when the story was published, staying in one of the original pavilions now called the MONA Pavilions. The 'Walsh' referred to in the headline was David Walsh the owner of the property, then called Moorilla, where I was staying. The 'life as art' part of the headline was a new work, *The Life of C.B. 2010-*, by the French artist Christian Boltanski, commissioned for David Walsh's new museum MONA. The story outlined the making of a work based on an archive of gathered surveillance data from three CCTV cameras. One might more particularly call this self-surveillance – the artist voluntarily placing himself within the constant gaze of these cameras for the rest of his life. The purpose of this self-designed intrusion into his studio being to create a portrait composed of an infinite number of fragments of the lived experience, a portrait that will remain largely inaccessible at any given time. Viewers will only ever be able to see fragments of the portrait relating to the present moment (subject to time delay), and

<sup>117</sup> Transcripts of both interviews can be found in the appendix.

<sup>118</sup> Obrist, HU 2011, Christian Boltanski, *The life of C.B.*, in '2010-Present', in Birnbaum, D, Cotter, S, et al 2011, *Defining contemporary art – 25 years in 200 pivotal artworks*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, p. 452.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 452.

<sup>120</sup> Glaetzer, S 2010, 'Walsh puts his money on life as art', *The Mercury*, Edition 1, 2 January, p. 3.

only if they travel to Hobart to witness the installed work. To complete this work the artist will be under camera surveillance whenever he is present in his studio in Malakoff (five kilometres from the heart of Paris), for the rest of his life. It was Susan Sontag who said, ‘...photographs are *memento mori*. To take a photograph is to participate in another person’s mortality...’<sup>121</sup> In this case the artist is ‘taking his own photograph,’ over and over and over again until he dies. Not a conventional still photograph (the kind referred to by Sontag) but rather a stream of images that form a *memento mori* of the artist’s making.

*The Life of C.B.* was commissioned in 2009 by Tasmanian-born art collector David Walsh for his new museum that would be called the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA). The manner of making *The Life of C.B.*, the purchase price of the work, the transgression of private space made public space and the manner of exhibition of the work were all components of an unusual agreement made between the collector and the artist. *The Life of C.B.* raised questions. What would it feel like to work day in and day out under constant self-imposed surveillance? Would the effect be similar to that of Jeremy Bentham’s much discussed Panopticon or ‘all seeing place?’<sup>122</sup> Has the artist given sufficient consideration to the consequences of being constantly watched? With the proliferation of CCTV cameras in our cities it is inevitable that the Panopticon analogy arises given that we, the inhabitants of the cities, cannot see the watchers – those who review the gathered CCTV data stream from the many cameras – and we do not know the end purpose of this gathering. Interestingly Bauman maintains that today we live in a post-panoptical world.<sup>123</sup> He believes we have passed beyond the Panopticon into another surveillance paradigm that is yet to be clearly defined. Whereas David Lyon, a sometime collaborator with Bauman, claims that, ‘Franz Kafka’s description of shadowy powers that leave you uncertain of anything (who knows what about you? How do they know? How will this knowledge affect you?) is perhaps closer to the mark in today’s database world...’<sup>124</sup>

The interior landscape of Boltanski’s studio, typically a refuge, a sanctuary in which to create work, would now become public and the thought process as it transmogrifies from the artist’s brain to hand as he works in his constantly surveilled work area, would (potentially) also be witnessed. The studio is under surveillance from three vantage points and the gathered data transmitted to Hobart, Australia, and screened in a public place. Obrist says that *The Life of C.B.* acknowledges the life of the artist as ‘...a public ritual, or rather as a ritualised making-public of the private that is, in a sense, constitutive of artistic existence as a collapse between

<sup>121</sup> Sontag, S 1977, *On photography*, Picador, New York, p. 15.

<sup>122</sup> Bauman, Z & Lyon, D 2013, *Liquid surveillance: a conversation*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 11.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., pp. 10-11.

work and non-work.<sup>125</sup>

Exactly how the purchase agreement was developed has morphed into mythology. What is known is that David Walsh will pay for *The Life of C.B.* by making regular monthly payments for the rest of the artist's life. Rather like a purchase on lay-by. For Walsh, determining the exact number of payments was the critical factor, his approach to decision making related to his mathematical skills used to amass a fortune from gambling. Using probabilistic modelling Walsh predicted that Boltanski had eight years to live and therefore his ideal would be ninety-six payments. If Boltanski lives longer and therefore payments continue beyond the estimated date, Walsh will be deemed to have 'lost' what is often mythologised as a 'bet with the Devil' – Walsh being the 'devil'.<sup>126</sup> For the artist payments continue until his actual death, no matter how long he lives. Art critic Charles Darwent conducted an interview with the artist in Paris after the purchase had been made public and during the interview the question of the contract was raised prompting the artist to say, '...he believes I will die before eight years, and I do not. It is very interesting, this idea of chance, no?'<sup>127</sup>

Chance is a dominant theme in Boltanski's work as I will discuss later in the chapter. Chance or randomness are also referred to as aleatoric processes and while evidence of the aleatoric approach exists in all art forms, one of the strongest connections for me is music and in particular the American composer John Cage. Sandywell reminds us that the '...ubiquity of aleatoric processes and chance experimentation is often taken to be a symptomatic expression of postmodern times...'<sup>128</sup> In his biography of John Cage, *The Roaring Silence – John Cage: a Life* (1992), David Revill writes, '...the practical basis of all Cage's work, his hallmark, the technique he sought to develop, was that of chance operations – usually generated with reference to the I Ching.'<sup>129</sup> The making of non-intentionality was the way he put his world view into practice.<sup>130</sup> While Cage used the I Ching, Boltanski drew on his own life and the circumstances of his birth, which he believed exemplified chance.

The aliveness of *The Life of C.B.*, this ever-changing catalogue of living material, stayed with

<sup>125</sup> Obrist, HU 2011, Christian Boltanski, *The life of C.B.*, in '2010-Present', in Birnbaum, D, Cotter, S, et al 2011, *Defining contemporary art – 25 years in 200 pivotal artworks*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, p. 452.

<sup>126</sup> Glaetzer, S 2010, 'Walsh puts his money on life as art', *The Mercury*, Edition 1, 2 January, p. 3.

<sup>127</sup> Darwent, C 2010, 'Christian Boltanski on gambling with his life and getting an audience to feel his pain', *Art Review*, issue 38, pp. 76-78.

Reprinted 2010, *Monanisms*, Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, p. 124.

<sup>128</sup> Sandywell, B 2011, *Dictionary of visual discourse: a dialectical lexicon of terms*, University of York, Ashgate Publishing, Farnham, p. 132.

<sup>129</sup> The use of the I Ching by Moira Smiley, Inga Swearingen and April Guthrie was discussed in section 2, chapter 3, 'The Innocent Eye and the Moment', in relation to the making of the experimental sound piece for the work *Arcadia*.

<sup>130</sup> Revill, D 1993, *The roaring silence: John Cage: a life*, Arcade Publishing, New York, section eleven (1950-1952), pp. 2-4.

me and in March 2010, in a curious twist, I followed the work to Tasmania where I now reside. On 24 January 2011, three days after the official opening of MONA, I viewed the work for the first time. In a functional sense the live feed from the three cameras in Boltanski's studio in France is digitally streamed twenty-four hours a day to a server on site at MONA where images are screened on nine screens in what Boltanski calls a *cave*. Each day the live feed is recorded onto Blu-ray discs and archived in a large library cabinet within the *cave* thereby accumulating an archive of the gradual disintegration of the artist from 2010 to death.<sup>131</sup> The use of the word *cave* is significant, something the artist has fostered given his ongoing desire to create myths. The nine monitors are actually located in a dimly lit bunker of utilitarian appearance at the ferry dock outside of the MONA museum proper rather than underground in an actual cave. Boltanski's lone pavilion at MONA presents as a box-like metal structure – functional and spare with a rabbit hole entrance (one domestic size entry door). In accordance with museum policy there is no signage and inside there is no curatorial panel to inform the spectator. The bunker presents as an uninviting museum services facility rather than a cabinet for an artwork by a revered French artist. In the next chapter however, excerpts from my interview with Christian Boltanski make it clear this is exactly what the artist wants. The siting of the work in a *cave* or bunker evokes Plato's metaphorical cave, a darkened space within which the flickering video monitors provide the movement. Are the prisoners within the cave (the spectators) looking at shadows or the sunlit reality?<sup>132</sup> Perhaps the design of the bunker simply confirms the artist's predilection for dark, mysterious and atmospheric exhibition spaces in preference to white box galleries. Nicole Durling, senior curator, MONA, says:

Christian determined the positioning and the style of housing...He did not wish to install the work within an environment where people are expecting to view or experience art. Perhaps it is his wish to be outside of the expected paradigm in an attempt to create a greater poignancy.<sup>133</sup>

Upon entering the dimly lit bunker spectators are confronted with a bank of screens which some might presume to be a security area causing them to leave without further enquiry. If the spectators stay they effectively become voyeurs. The watchers watch from a safe place where they cannot be identified. Phillips maintains that, 'we cannot blame the camera for what it has done to us; nevertheless, it has made certain human predilections much easier to satisfy... Human hunger for seeing the forbidden has not changed. The technologies to

<sup>131</sup> Obrist, HU 2011, Christian Boltanski, *The life of C.B.*, in '2010-Present', in Birnbaum, D, Cotter, S, et al 2011, *Defining contemporary art – 25 years in 200 pivotal artworks*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, p. 452.

<sup>132</sup> Rubenstein, M-J 2011, *Strange wonder: the closure of metaphysics and the opening of awe*, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 22.

<sup>133</sup> Durling, N 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 3 March.

facilitate it have.<sup>134</sup> Today technology has created within us a desire for experiences, excitement and information that must be delivered quickly. I believe that today's spectators look for a fast entry point into a work. If this is not apparent they will more than likely move on to the next offering greedy for excitement or the unexpected. As Bauman says (quoting Lewis Carroll's Red Queen), '...here it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place...In our sensation-addicted world, ever stronger stimuli are needed to keep the attention awake for longer than a fleeting moment.'<sup>135</sup> The spectator moves on rather than spending time trying to establish what it is they are actually looking at – in this case a bank of nine screens providing a unique and constantly changing view of the living artist. The eye of the spectator glances, slithers, across the screens, committing to no particular screen. In the darkened room the light comes from the screens. The images flicker uncertainly.



PLATE 13 IMAGES 29-31

*The Life of C.B.*, 2010- , MONA, outside the bunker, iPhone image Greer Honeywill

*The Life of C.B.*, 2010- , MONA inside the bunker, iPhone image Ross Honeywill

On one of my visits to view *The Life of C.B.* a fellow ferry passenger followed asking if the bunker was a toilet, despite the bank of nine active screens, and seemed surprised when I answered in the negative. The bunker is both confusing and disorienting unless one has some knowledge of the artist, the work and the reason for the placement. Roger Scruton in his paper, 'Photography and Representation' (1981) said, '...that the medium in photography [and I include CCTV data capture] has lost all importance: it can present us with what we see, but it cannot tell us how to see it.'<sup>136</sup> Adding, '...the camera may create an atmosphere – it may be an instrument of expression – but it is unable to make any precise or cogent analysis of what it

<sup>134</sup> Phillips, SS, 'Looking out, looking in: voyeurism and its affinities from the beginning of photography', in Phillips, SS (ed.), Baker, S, Brookman, P et al, 2010, *Exposed: voyeurism, surveillance and the camera*, exhibition catalogue, 28 May-3 October 2010, Tate Modern, London, UK, p.11.

<sup>135</sup> Bauman, Z 1995, *Life in fragments: essays in postmodern morality*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, p. 157.

<sup>136</sup> Scruton, R 1981, 'Photography and representation', *Critical inquiry*, vol. 7, no. 3, University of Chicago Press, p. 590.

shows.’<sup>137</sup> Nearly three decades later, Phillips said that:

...surveillance has become especially compelling to contemporary artists...perhaps because it engages a certain anxiety felt in culture. What characterizes most surveillance photographs is a spirit of distance, abstraction, and a certain placid ambiguity. By definition they are without affect. Most often we have to be taught what these pictures mean.<sup>138</sup>

Phillips says that in this respect the works ‘...resemble conceptual art.’<sup>139</sup>

Subsequent to the first viewing of *The Life of C.B.*, I discussed the work with Durling. The discussion began with the curator’s description of how the time delay between Australia and France works on the bank of screens:

Inside the bunker visitors are confronted with a grid of nine screens. The top three screens show live capture from each of the three cameras; any and all activity within the studio that falls within the gaze of the cameras. Everything the artist does and all activity of visitors to the studio, including Boltanski’s assistants, is captured and streamed. The middle row of screens display a twelve-hour delay and the bottom line of screens show what is referred to as edited highlights. Technicians at MONA have been instructed to record any movement for say ten seconds then stop which gives an interrupted image. The feed to these screens contrasts with the feed on the top row of screens where activity may be slight or non-existent; the artist may be absent for instance.<sup>140</sup>

I asked Durling when the work would be deemed to be over. ‘*The Life of C.B.* as a project is deemed over when there is no life, when Christian Boltanski is dead but interestingly, also alive,’ she said.<sup>141</sup> Rather like Erwin Schrodinger’s thought experiment of 1935 where the cat in the box is both alive and dead at the same time.<sup>142</sup> Even in death Boltanski’s work is not necessarily over. A huge archive of CCTV footage will exist that has the potential to be exhibited in some

<sup>137</sup> Scruton, R 1981, ‘Photography and representation’, *Critical inquiry*, vol. 7, no. 3, University of Chicago Press, p. 600.

<sup>138</sup> Phillips, SS (ed.), Baker, S & Brookman, P et al 2010, *Exposed: voyeurism, surveillance and the camera*, exhibition catalogue, 28 May-3 October 2010, Tate Modern, London, UK, p. 143.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>140</sup> Durling, N 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 3 March.

<sup>141</sup> Durling, N 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 3 March.

<sup>142</sup> Gribbin, J 1984, *In search of Schrödinger’s cat: quantum physics and reality*, Bantam Books, New York, p. 203. The *Schrödinger’s Cat* thought experiment exemplifies the idea of an entity being both alive and dead at the same time. In 1935 Erwin Schrödinger imagined a box that contains a radioactive source, a Geiger counter, a glass bottle containing cyanide, and a live cat. The Geiger counter is switched on for just long enough that there is a fifty-fifty chance that one of the atoms in the radioactive material will decay and that the detector will record a particle. If the detector does record such an event, then the glass container is crushed and the cat dies; if not, the cat lives. Put simply, the observer cannot see the cat in the box, so until he lifts the lid, the cat is neither dead nor alive, the cat is both dead and alive, at the same time. As the experiment goes, there is a fifty-fifty chance that the cat will be killed. The strangeness of the quantum world means the atomic decay has neither happened nor not happened, the cat has neither been killed nor not killed. The cat is both dead and alive, existing in some indeterminate state, until an observer looks inside the box. The sub-atomic quantum science reflects a view that civilization is simultaneously annihilated and thriving, at once self-perfecting and self-destroying, utopian and dystopian.



form and as I discuss later the artist has a particular interest in his works being re-presented after his death. *The Life of C.B.* and other recent works by the artist demonstrate a shift to embrace the use of readily available technology as a means of keeping works active, 'alive', constantly changing, for an unspecified period of time. His well known use of the more static, emblematic and emotionally charged gatherings of the detritus of past lives such as clothing or photographs of deceased persons is gradually giving way to the gathering of fragments of the ordinary act of living using readily available technology. The artist's on-line subscription work *Storage Memory*, discussed in the previous section, is part of this shift. In an interview with author and critic David Mendelsohn, Boltanski said that to, '...be an artist is perhaps to try to capture life, life that has gone, or life such as it exists.'<sup>143</sup>

The installation of *The Life of C.B.*, as Durling has said, confirms Boltanski's desire to install his works in ever more remote and unconventional situations rather than conventional galleries. Catherine Grenier, curator, historian and Deputy Director of the National Museum of Modern Art – Centre Pompidou, has written extensively on Boltanski. In her book, *Christian Boltanski: There's a story...* (2010), she writes that from 1986 Boltanski began to demonstrate:

...a predilection for non-museum spaces...which place the viewer in a state of heightened receptivity to emotion, rather than to aesthetic pleasure or intellectual curiosity...[for instance] in 2003 in the disused warehouses of Point P. in Paris; in 2005 in the basement of a swimming pool during the Lyon Biennial; in the same year at the Theatre du Chalet (greenrooms, backstage areas).<sup>144</sup>

Currently, Durling says, the artist is focused on opportunities that will allow him to create a series of bunkers situated in remote areas across the world. The first of these remote works have been sited on islands – the island of Tasmania and the island of Teshima (Teshima is an island off the coast of Japan in the Seto Inland Sea).<sup>145</sup>

Christian Boltanski has a clearly articulated obsession with death. He uses the idea of the portrait or the mirror in *The Life of C.B.* as a means of both creating a *memento mori* and paradoxically as a way of staving off death. Boltanski says:

It is important to discuss the fact that we will die instead of ignoring or avoiding it – I wish not to die but it is better to see the truth – it is part of life that at one point I do not return. It is impossible to succeed in the fight against dying. You can't presume you don't have to pass on.<sup>146</sup>

The artist discussed his obsession about death with Tamar Garb in an interview for the

<sup>143</sup> Boltanski, C, in Grenier, C, Mendelsohn, D (interview), Radzinowicz, D (translation) 2010, *Christian Boltanski: there's a story...* Flammarion, S.A., Paris, p. 143.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>145</sup> Durling, N 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 3 March.

<sup>146</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 12 October.

monograph, *Christian Boltanski* (1997), saying to Garb, ‘...when I told you at the beginning of the interview that I was ‘dead’ already, it was to do with avoiding death. The idea of not being anybody, or being a mirror, is a way of not dying because I am already dead...But I know that I do have a morbid relationship with death.’<sup>147</sup> The artist’s focus on death and the role of chance is influenced strongly by the circumstances of his early life and the unexpected event of his birth. Like Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010) the weight of this personal history influences his entire body of work. And like Louise Bourgeois, over time, the telling and re-telling of these personal narratives shifts, developing a fictive quality, which accumulates as mythology. Boltanski confided to Garb, ‘...in my early work I pretended to speak about my childhood, yet my real childhood has disappeared. I have lied about it so often that I no longer have a real memory of this time, and my childhood has become, for me, some kind of universal childhood, not a real one.’<sup>148</sup> Writer and critic Luc Sante in his foreword to the book *The Possible Life of Christian Boltanski* (2009) summarises the artist’s early life:

Boltanski was born in Paris in 1944, the second child of a secular Jewish physician father and a novelist mother who, while herself a gentile, was the parent who kept the children in touch with their Jewish roots. During the German occupation the father hid under the floorboards of their apartment, emerging at least long enough to sire Christian (who was baptized Christian-Liberté). After the war, Boltanski’s father turned increasingly to an idiosyncratically mystical ascetic form of Christianity, while his mother followed a slightly more conventional path as a left-wing intellectual. The children (there were eventually four), who for long stretches during the war did not leave the apartment, seldom left it afterwards, either, and Christian had very little conventional schooling. He in fact ended up living at home until he was nearly thirty and had met Annette Messager, to whom he has been married for thirty-five years.<sup>149</sup>

As improbable as it may seem this is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the strange story of the Boltanski family and the first thirty-five years of the artist’s life. Boltanski maintains he is alive purely by chance and for decades he has been telling and retelling the circumstances of his birth. He was born in 1944 during the German occupation of France (1940-1944) a time when the American academic Ronald C. Rosbottom says ‘Paris went dark.’<sup>150</sup> To remain consistent with the protective family subterfuge that his mother had divorced his Jewish father Boltanski was adopted by relatives in 1945. He was given a chance, he says, when another baby in that fraught time, might not have been given the chance.<sup>151</sup>

The writer Jorge Luis Borges, a great believer in mythology and fantasy maintained that, ‘...

<sup>147</sup> Semin, D, Garb, T & Kuspit, D 1997, *Christian Boltanski*, Phaidon Press Limited, New York, pp. 27-30.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>149</sup> Grenier, C, Sante, L (foreword) 2009, *The possible life of Christian Boltanski*, MFA Publications, Boston, p. 4.

<sup>150</sup> Rosbottom, RC 2014, *When Paris went dark: the city of light under German occupation, 1940-1944*, John Murray Publishers, London, p. 17.

<sup>151</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 12 October.



in the beginning of literature is the myth, and in the end as well.<sup>152</sup> Christian Boltanski is a storyteller and a mythmaker acutely aware that his emotive mythologies capture both media and spectator attention, which in turn promotes discussion. And it is this discussion that he seeks. Grenier says:

...[right] from the start, Boltanski strove to create not actual stories, but vehicles for stories that the viewer has to recompose and interpret. Thus the essence of his work is less narrative than allusive, less literally autobiographical than enigmatic.<sup>153</sup>

It was the idea of cohabiting in private with three CCTV cameras and selling that vision to a third party to be shown in his public gallery that attracted my attention when I read the newspaper story in January 2010. Now the idea is an established reality that has been operational for more than four years. In the bunker the output on the screens is not cinematic and it is not necessarily engaging to watch, especially if the artist is not in the studio. There is however a degree of tension at play about what *might* happen. What might the artist do? If he is not there will he arrive? Who might enter the studio? In this respect the work excites the imagination of the spectator, the voyeur, the one who desires to witness a particular occurrence while they are present in the bunker. Whether the spectator witnesses a particular moment or not is pure chance. When the spectator leaves the bunker they know that day after day Boltanski will be there in the same frame – the desk and computer, the couch and chairs and the work area. If the spectator returns in a year or more will there be detectable changes?

Should we be watching? The artist wants us to watch in one sense although he makes it extremely hard for the spectator to access the work because the artist prefers his bunker works to be remotely located. That is why *The Life of C.B.* is located in Tasmania, the distance from Europe, for example, a deterrent for many travellers from the northern hemisphere. What Boltanski aims to foster is the discussion of the *idea* of the work: the idea that an artist can sell fragments of his life to an art collector. As the artist says, ‘...it is about the ephemeral idea and the ripples of discussion, that is what is important, not the documentation or the bunker.’<sup>154</sup> And I believe it is not only the *idea* but also the timeliness of the work that is relevant. This is a work reflective of our time, especially in its use of commonly available technology mirroring the prevalent ubiquity of CCTV cameras in public and private spaces in cities across the world. It is also reflective of the insatiable public desire to document and disseminate every aspect of life. The artist is not using the CCTV camera as a means of gathering footage that might shock or provoke, instead he uses the stream of data to create a living portrait so vast that it is

<sup>152</sup> Borges, JL, Yates, DA & Irby, JE (eds), Gibson, W (introduction) 2007, *Labyrinths: selected stories and other writings* (1964), New Directions, New York, p. 242.

<sup>153</sup> Grenier, C, Mendelsohn, D (interview), Radzinowicz, D (translation) 2010, *Christian Boltanski: there's a story...* Flammarion, S.A., Paris, p. 5.

<sup>154</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 12 October.

impossible to view beyond the present moment.<sup>155</sup>

Journalist Brian Selter of The New York Times wrote a story in 2011 in which he refers to the Internet as 'the place where anonymity dies',<sup>156</sup> a phrase that captivated Bauman. Bauman quoting Selter says:

Everything private is now done, potentially, in public – and is potentially available for the duration, till the end of time, as the Internet 'can't be made to forget' anything once recorded on any of its innumerable servers. 'This erosion of anonymity is a product of pervasive social media services, cheap cell phone cameras, free photo and video Web hosts, and perhaps most important of all, a change in people's views about what ought to be public and what ought to be private.'<sup>157</sup>

While Boltanski's work is not connected to the Internet, every time a spectator takes a photograph on an iPhone and posts that image Selter's phrase about anonymity applies.

At the end of my conversation with Nicole Durling we talked about ideas I was developing related to this work. My aim was twofold. The first objective was to secure an interview with the artist to discuss the *The Life of C.B.*, an interview that would also give me access to Boltanski's studio. Secondly, I aimed to perpetrate a simple gestural intervention within the studio by intentionally moving in front of a CCTV camera, lifting my camera into position (eye to eye) and taking a photograph. This performative gesture creating fragments of vision that would return to Hobart recording both my presence in the studio at that time and my action. Obrist would call this intervention 'an unforeseen encounter.'<sup>158</sup> The intervention causing a momentary rupture between domains – the participant as observer and the observer as performer, the perpetrator fluidly moving between roles and for a moment changing the outcome with a simple gesture. However, tangible proof would be required, proof of existence at that moment, evidence that I was there as much a performer as Boltanski if only for that moment. Werner Heisenberg, creator of the 'Uncertainty Principle' (1927) and Physicist, Niels Bohr together developed the 'Copenhagen Interpretation' (1924-1927), which states, '...in quantum physics the observer interacts with the system to such an extent that the system cannot be thought of

<sup>155</sup> As a rough indication the number of hours of footage gathered and stored on Blu-ray discs in the bunker from the opening of the museum in January 2011 to the end of 2014 is approximately 105,120 hours (6,307,200 minutes).

<sup>156</sup> Selter, B 2011, 'Upending anonymity, these days the web unmasks everyone', *New York Times*, viewed 3 March 2014, <[http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/21/us/21anonymity.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/21/us/21anonymity.html?_r=0)>.

<sup>157</sup> Bauman, Z & Lyon, D 2013, *Liquid surveillance: a conversation*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 22.

<sup>158</sup> Obrist, HU 2011, Christian Boltanski, *The life of C.B.*, in '2010-Present', in Birnbaum, D, Cotter, S, et al 2011, *Defining contemporary art – 25 years in 200 pivotal artworks*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, p. 452.

as having independent existence.’<sup>159</sup> According to the ‘Copenhagen Interpretation’ (1924-1927):

We have to accept that the very act of observing a thing changes it and that we, the observers, are in a very real sense part of the experiment...<sup>160</sup>

Nothing observed or witnessed remains unaltered and the slippage between the role of observer and participant provides yet another layer of complexity to the act of looking and being looked at. As Elkins says, ‘...looking has force: it tears, it is sharp. It is acid. In the end it corrodes the object and the observer until they are lost in the field of vision. I once was solid, and now I am dissolved: that is the voice of seeing.’<sup>161</sup>

I was aware that if I succeeded in obtaining an interview with the artist in his studio I would require relevant stills from the streamed footage of *The Life of C.B.*, to support both this exegesis and my work and that would require the cooperation of MONA. My plan to stage an intervention could be likened to the American performance and installation artist Vito Acconci (1940- ) and in particular an early work titled *Following Piece* 1969.<sup>162</sup> To make this work the artist followed people who were unaware they were being followed, through the streets of New York until they disappeared from the public space. Documentary photographs were taken by a third party, each image showing Acconci’s back and the back of the person he was following – a by-product of the third party photographer remaining out of sight. Marta Gili writes in her catalogue essay for *Exposed* that Acconci:

...basically tried to explore the hazy line between the public and private realms...The simplicity of this action might seem a childish game: we are reminded of the mischief perpetrated by street urchins in some neorealist Spanish and Italian films of the 1950s, where gangs of kids ring every doorbell in an apartment building before running away. The objective of that game is to witness, from a safe hiding place, the confusion and outrage of tenants.<sup>163</sup>

Gili quotes the Italian Philosopher Giorgio Agamben, who maintains that, ‘...to return play to its purely profane vocation is a political task.’ Gili goes on to say, again quoting Agamben that, ‘...Acconci’s work returns play to the streets of New York, in order to explore ideas about

<sup>159</sup> Gribbin, J 1984, *In search of Schrödinger’s cat: quantum physics and reality*, Bantam Books, New York, p. 160.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>161</sup> Elkins, J 1998, *The object stares back*, Harvest edition published by arrangement with Simon & Schuster, New York, p. 45.

<sup>162</sup> In section 4, chapter 2, I discuss artists who re-present existing art works – an action some might call appropriation. In the research phase for this work I gave consideration to re-presenting Acconci’s work, *Following Piece*.

<sup>163</sup> Gili, M, ‘From observation to surveillance’, in Phillips, SS (ed.), Baker, S & Brookman, P et al 2010, *Exposed: voyeurism, surveillance and the camera*, exhibition catalogue, 28 May-3 October 2010, Tate Modern, London, UK, pp. 240-243.

private and public space and “to put them to a new use, to play with them.”<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Gili, M, ‘From observation to surveillance’, in Phillips, SS (ed.), Baker, S & Brookman, P et al 2010, *Exposed: voyeurism, surveillance and the camera*, exhibition catalogue, 28 May-3 October 2010, Tate Modern, London, UK, p. 243.

# 03

## 02 CCTV the Artist and the Archive of Moments: part II

Do we seek out the fragment as more vivid and exciting than a unifying principle? Think for a moment of the significance Proust builds up around the tiny word “*pan*” (patch, panel) as an isolated, fleeting item of perception caught and magnetized by the artistic sensibility. Proust’s “patch” bears a startling resemblance to Joyce’s cry in the street – the brief awareness of a fleck of naked reality imprinting itself on our consciousness.

- ROGER SHATTUCK<sup>165</sup>

In this chapter I detail my own lived experience of chance. It was my plan to conduct an interview with Christian Boltanski and at the same time to perpetrate a gestural intervention within the artist’s studio by photographing the mechanism that photographs Boltanski each day – a CCTV camera. As I complete this gestural action images will be streamed to MONA, proof that I was there at that time. My gesture would be ordinary, slight, and playful. Sol LeWitt (1928-2007) would say the performance (as Nicholas Baume reminds us) is ‘perfunctory’ it is the idea that is important.<sup>166</sup> Baume cites LeWitt as saying if, ‘...the artist carries through his idea and makes it into visible form, then all of the steps in the process are of importance. The idea itself, even if not made visual, is as much a work of art as any finished product.’<sup>167</sup>

In the moment of action as I move from observer to participant, interviewer to performer, the spectator in the bunker in Hobart (should there be one) will witness a momentary disruption to Boltanski’s established paradigm. John Berger says in the age of reproduction the meaning of art becomes more fluid, less attached, ‘...meaning becomes transmissible: that is to say it becomes information of a sort, and, like all information, it is either put to use or ignored...’<sup>168</sup> While the gesture may be unseen the fragments will be streamed to Hobart and the evidence will exist somewhere within the archive. As Boltanski has said, ‘...the idea has always been

<sup>165</sup> Shattuck, R 1984, *The innocent eye: on modern literature & the arts*, Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, p. 37.

<sup>166</sup> Baume, N (ed.), Flatley, J & Lee, P 2001, *Sol LeWitt: incomplete open cubes*, exhibition catalogue, 26 January-29 April 2001, The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut, US, p. 20.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>168</sup> Berger, J 1972, *Ways of seeing*, Penguin Books and the BBC, London, p. 24.

about hiding something – hiding information and having viewers understand that information is there, but hidden.<sup>169</sup> My existence and my action will become part of the hiding game Boltanski plays with his audience.

Nicole Durling's contact with Christian Boltanski on my behalf took five months to obtain a reaction. Eventually an answer came permitting the curator to pass on the artist's contact details. On 17 August 2011 I sent an email requesting a meeting in Paris at a convenient time in 2012.

From: Christian Boltanski  
 Subject: Re: Research scholar - studio visit and conversation  
 Date: 22 August 2011 12:58:04 AM AEST  
 To: Dr Greer Honeywill  
 it will be a plasure to see you in paris to speak whith you ababout yor work, j am leaving now to japon and j come back the 8 of september, after j shall be in N.Y between the 18 and the 26 of september, in october j have several small traveuls in Italie  
 hope to see you soon  
 C.B.

While the response was positive it was for 2011 not 2012 as requested. If I accepted this generous invitation rather than risking the artist's ire by pushing for 2012 it would require fast action. I accepted the invitation and asked for specific dates and a means of contact.

From: Christian Boltanski  
 Subject: Re: Research scholar on the way  
 Date: 9 September 2011 12:58:57 AM AEST  
 To: Dr Greer Honeywill  
 J can see you in paris the 12 or after, the 9 and the 10 j am in venise, please send me a mail or phone me when you errive tel:XXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
 See you soon  
 christian

It seemed entirely reckless to put money and effort at risk based on the gossamer thin content of two emails, neither of which actually contained a firm appointment. While the interview was agreed in a general sense the specifics had yet to be set, and all I had in my hand was an invitation to, 'contact me when you arrive', as though I was catching a local train, not travelling from Australia. One simply had to believe in Boltanski's integrity and to be fair he did not falter. As arrangements progressed October 2011 proved to be perfectly timed. I would be able to travel on to the Venice Biennale after the interview to see Boltanski's work *Chance* curated

<sup>169</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, 'Storage Memory', *ART iT* (Asia), interview, viewed 29 August 2011, <artit.asia/u/admin\_ed\_feature\_e/t1uqPVvlmHDaM9rjyGon/>.



by Jean-Hubert Martin in the French Pavilion.<sup>170</sup>

Feelings of anxiety accumulated as the departure date approached. ‘What if I arrive in Paris and call the number and find no-one at the other end?’ The tension became so great I decided to Google Christian Boltanski with a view to finding his address in Malakoff. It took four hours before a confirmed address was found. The address also indicated that Annette Messenger (1943- ) and Sophie Calle (1953- ) were resident in the same building. With the address and an image of the building in hand I determined that at the very least I would be photographed in proximity to the building. It was a plan that relieved anxiety however it was a flawed plan. Boltanski does not have a studio in that building his studio is a kilometre away at an address I knew nothing about.



PLATE 14 IMAGES 32-33

Google Earth images of the Malakoff building shared by Christian Boltanski, Annette Messenger and Sophie Calle

There was one more problem. The more I read about Christian Boltanski the more I realised he did not like to conduct interviews in his studio preferring to use cafes and restaurants in Paris as an adjunct to his studio. Meeting in his studio for even a short time was absolutely essential to my purpose. In the end all the anxiety proved unnecessary because everything fell perfectly into place when I arrived in Paris and spoke to Christian Boltanski on the phone. In the brief conversation arrangements for the interview were confirmed and the artist agreed that the interview would be conducted in his studio.

Focus could now move to researching Boltanski's works on show in Paris museums. The first work discovered was *Les archives de Christian Boltanski, 1965-1988, 1989*, an early work, part

<sup>170</sup> Jean-Hubert Martin has earned an international reputation for his curatorial approach and for his directorships of major art institutions such as the Musée National D'Art Moderne Centre Pompidou, Paris (1987-1999). Martin also curated the *Theatre of the World* exhibition. This exhibition brought together works from The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, and works and artifacts from David Walsh's, MONA collection. *Theatre of the World* toured to Paris in 2013.

of the collection of the Centre Pompidou. The curatorial wall panel outlined the impetus for the work: *In 1969 the artist conceived of a long-term project, which involved 'conserving of the moments of ones life, all the objects one has been in contact with, everything one has said and everything that has been said around one, that is my goal.'* The work consisted of six hundred and forty-six rusty biscuit tins containing more than twelve hundred photographs and eight hundred documents. Is this true or is this a fiction? One can see the biscuit tins but not the contents inside the tins. Perhaps the documents are hidden in the tins and maybe they are not. It is this involving nature of play Boltanski seeks to create. The work also exemplifies the artist's stance that art should be about life, and in particular about his life, rather than art as a theoretical or philosophical proposition.



PLATE 15 IMAGES 34-35

Christian Boltanski, *Les archives de Christian Boltanski, 1965-1988, 1989*

iPhone image Ross Honeywill

The door to Christian Boltanski's studio, Malakoff, 2011

iPhone image Ross Honeywill

On Wednesday 12 October I travelled the short distance to Malakoff and Boltanski's studio. I arrived early and waited nearby. Access to the studio was from a narrow blind lane. At the appointed time I walked down the lane and found the number, or what remained of the number, since it was mostly obliterated by black spray paint. I noticed an ancient doorbell and hoped it worked. To the alley the building displayed only garage-like double doors with a level above. It presented no clue about what was within. I pressed the doorbell and footsteps could soon be heard. He was unmistakable at the door. The greeting was a somewhat overwhelming moment for me and for him an awkward moment as he adjusted to the expected stranger at the door.

I ascended the stairs to the mezzanine level as directed and walked into the familiar, as if walking onto a well-known television set. The desk and computer, the couch and the coffee table and

the work area below are homely, known, and yet the areas that fall immediately beyond the gaze of the three CCTV cameras are completely unknown, foreign and secretive. From the top of the staircase a narrow walkway connected the mezzanine with the far side of the studio where several door-like apertures were apparent. It was an overcast day and in the dim light I could not see what was housed within. There appeared to be minimal storage unless the studio extended well beyond what I could see. Everything was of surprisingly modest proportions. Work was in progress in the space on the ground floor. Wire was strung, spaghetti-like, from one side of the mezzanine to the other above a group of figures that reminded me of the walking figures in Boltanski's highly theatrical work, (*Prendre la Parole*) *Speaking Up*, 2005. I make the comment that I like his recent installation utilizing fluorescent lights to recreate identification marks made by seventeenth century Spanish stonemasons. The work *Signatures*, 2011, is installed in the darkness of an ancient well below the site that is now the Es Baluard Museu d'Art Modern i Contemporani de Palma in Spain. He responds with good humour and irony saying his work is often not seen 'because it is in the dark'.<sup>171</sup> As Grenier has said it is not Boltanski's intention '...to instruct, but to disorientate the viewer, which explains his taste for dark spaces, unusual spaces...'<sup>172</sup> We sit in the Kandinsky chairs adjacent to the couch, me with my back to the camera that surveils that space and he facing the camera. In the studio there is silence. It is absolute. Not a bird tweet, no hum of life, no creak of building, no traffic noise – just the two of us, our voices resonating in the space for the next ninety minutes.



PLATE 16 IMAGES 36-37

Christian Boltanski, *Signatures*, 2011

Es Baluard Museu d'Art Modern i Contemporani de Palma in Spain

Christian Boltanski, *Prendre la Parole*, (*Speaking Up*), 2005

Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris

Image courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery

We begin with a discussion about *The Life of C.B.* Boltanski said he developed the idea to 'perfect' his own life, meaning to make a model or exemplar with himself central to the idea. Through this work Boltanski effectively sees his life as 'on loan' until such time as he dies:

<sup>171</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 12 October.

<sup>172</sup> Grenier, C, Mendelsohn, D (interview), Radzinowicz, D (translation) 2010, *Christian Boltanski: there's a story...* Flammarion, S.A., Paris, p. 129.

It is important to discuss the fact that we will die instead of ignoring or avoiding it. I wish not to die but it is better to see the truth – it is part of life that at one point I do not return. David has my memory. Every moment of my life is going to be recorded – that is more beautiful to show the stages of life rather than denying changes as we do now. The work with David is like protecting my life in big boxes. We are all unique, fragile, but the memory fades.<sup>173</sup>

*The Life of C.B.*, this incomplete portrait that fades as fast as it develops, and renews as fast as it fades, is highly relevant to the artist's current practice. In an interview with Grenier, he said:

If you're looking for something distinct about the works I've done over the last decade or so, it would be that I've invested more in the idea of the self-portrait than I had before... and the work you and I are doing together in these interviews is also part of this wish to gather everything up before dying... Before, the works were about the disappearance of childhood, or disappearance in general, but now there's a more autobiographical side to it. The other thing that's happened over the last few years is that photography has disappeared.<sup>174</sup>

While Boltanski's living portrait accumulates as a CCTV gathering, even as we speak, Roger Scruton's criteria for a photographic portrait remain pertinent. He says, '...it follows, first, that the subject of the photograph must exist; second, that it (the subject) must appear roughly as it appears in the photograph; and third, that its appearance in the photograph is its appearance at a particular moment of its existence.'<sup>175</sup> While the subject of life and death is never far from our discussion so it is with mythology and story telling. '*The Life of C.B.* is like a fable. The images go to a cave' the artist says.<sup>176</sup> I reply saying 'the work is not in a cave it is in a metal bunker above the ground on a ferry dock,' and he replies that he knows, however it is part of the mythology he is consciously trying to develop. Grenier expanding on truth and lies in Boltanski's work says:

All stories speak of lies and truth as one and the same thing, because in art a lie is constitutive of truth and the truth attainable only through lying. In doing this, these narratives and legends weave verbal circles around the artists' world; they allow access, but they also get his oeuvre across – an oeuvre that, because it speaks of transmission should be easy to transmit.<sup>177</sup>

Grenier added that in the formulation of a story for transmission the artist has a preference for the informal, the absurd and the oral:

<sup>173</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 12 October.

<sup>174</sup> Grenier, C, Sante, L (foreword) 2009, *The possible life of Christian Boltanski*, MFA Publications, Boston, p. 196.

<sup>175</sup> Scruton, R 1981, 'Photography and representation', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 7, no. 3, University of Chicago Press, p. 588.

<sup>176</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 12 October.

<sup>177</sup> Grenier, C, Mendelsohn, D (interview), Radzinowicz, D (translation) 2010, *Christian Boltanski: there's a story...* Flammarion, S.A., Paris, p. 5.

As he likes to remind us Christian Boltanski is little concerned with the literary and is not a great reader. What he enjoys most are folktales, jokes, and anecdotes, which all draw on the great storehouse that is the oral tradition.<sup>178</sup>

The artist and I talk about the bunker at MONA and why it is placed so far from the gallery. He says he wanted that. He did not wish the work to be inside where it would be judged against other paintings and sculpture and perhaps judged to be not so good ‘because it is not art.’<sup>179</sup> I say, ‘but it is art’. ‘You are right,’ he says, ‘but it is about the ephemeral idea and the ripples of discussion that is what is important not the documentation or the bunker.’<sup>180</sup> The fact that people coming and going from MONA regularly fail to look inside the bunker is of no interest to him. In fact he prefers that. For him it is all about the discussion:

It is important to know the story; the idea is the important thing. The work exists through the discussion of the story – that transmission is the key. That the work exists is not the important aspect. But the work must be ‘there’ in a physical sense somewhere but where is not important, the discussion is.<sup>181</sup>

On the subject of the permanently placed cameras in his studio he says, ‘I forget the cameras completely.’<sup>182</sup> I question this, raising the Panopticon effect where the ever watched are eventually driven mad. I ask if living within the gaze of the cameras will eventually drive him mad. He says, ‘No’:

David can see everything [laughing]. He can zoom in; he can see me doing this every day [he gestures to scratch his nose]. He could even read your notes [laughing].<sup>183</sup>

Apparently I look slightly startled by the idea and he says mischievously, ‘wave to the camera, wave to David.’<sup>184</sup> I obediently turn to the camera behind me. The images are silently streamed to MONA. This is yet another example of the artist’s constant desire to build myths. As Durling stated in our discussion David Walsh does not watch the footage or play any part in the streaming of the live feed and the cameras do not have the ability to ‘zoom in’. Boltanski knows this and he knows that I know it. He enjoys creating the ripple effect reaching to both hemispheres and back.

<sup>178</sup> Grenier, C, Mendelsohn, D (interview), Radzinowicz, D (translation) 2010, *Christian Boltanski: there’s a story...* Flammarion, S.A., Paris, p. 129.

<sup>179</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 12 October.

<sup>180</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 12 October.

<sup>181</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 12 October.

<sup>182</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 12 October.

<sup>183</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 12 October.

<sup>184</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 12 October.



I ask about the serial aspects inherent in his archive works and he says that to him seriality is like a musical score that can be played again and again by someone else. 'I consider what I do to be like a musical score, and anyone can play it. Each time it's played, it means something different.'<sup>185</sup> The work, he said, can be made and remade rather like Sol LeWitt's wall drawings.<sup>186</sup> Since LeWitt's death his drawings have been performed in major international exhibitions and consequently the memory of LeWitt remains immediate. In her catalogue essay for the exhibition *Sol LeWitt: Incomplete Open Cubes*, 2001, Stanford University academic, Pamela M. Lee commented that LeWitt's systems approach, '...offers the possibility of [works] being executed in different locales by different hands, so that the driving concept of the work functions in the way a musical score does, enabling a wealth of new variations with each iteration in time.'<sup>187</sup> LeWitt's wall drawings continue to be re-made in accordance with the original system devised by the artist. Even when he was alive these works were not executed by LeWitt instead they were executed by teams of people working with his system a method that allows the works to be made and re-made into infinity.<sup>188</sup> Unlike LeWitt, Boltanski leaves no specific guiding document and therefore interpretation, translation and adaptation will become the hallmark of works re-created after his death. As he discussed with Grenier he would prefer that his works remained active. 'What I'd like is that, after I'm gone people would reinstall my works in relation to the spaces, and sign them along with me. The way Sol LeWitt anticipated for his *Wall Drawings*: "Interpretation by so-and-so of a work by Christian Boltanski."<sup>189</sup> What LeWitt and Boltanski have in common is a desire to extend the moment, to keep the beauty present – one in death and one contemplating death. To leave such a repeatable legacy is to fight, in the words of Dylan Thomas, 'against the dying of the light.'<sup>190</sup> To fight, long past death, against the fading of ideas that have become associated with the artist.

It is in this context that I contemplate the future of the massive Blu-ray archive in the bunker at MONA after the artist's death. No matter what the configuration, the archive is so vast that the beginning and end will never be seen at the one time. Nothing can be seen beyond the fragments witnessed in that moment when the spectator stands in front of the work. In *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, (1995) Pierre Hadot, the French Philosopher and historian of philosophy, talks about the lineage of the belief in the present. He evokes Goethe when he says we should

<sup>185</sup> Semin, D, Garb, T & Kuspit, D 1997, *Christian Boltanski*, Phaidon Press Limited, New York, p. 16.

<sup>186</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 12 October.

<sup>187</sup> Baume, N (ed.), Flatley, J & Lee, P 2001, *Sol LeWitt: incomplete open cubes*, exhibition catalogue, 26 January-29 April 2001, The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut, US, p. 57.

<sup>188</sup> On 18 June 2012 I visited the Sol LeWitt retrospective at The Centre Pompidou-Metz in regional France. The exhibition titled, *Sol LeWitt Wall Drawings from 1968-2007*, consisted of thirty-three wall drawings selected from 1,200 made by the artist between 1968 and 2007.

<sup>189</sup> Grenier, C, Sante, L (foreword) 2009, *The possible life of Christian Boltanski*, MFA Publications, Boston, p. 205.

<sup>190</sup> Thomas, D 1951, 'Do not go gentle into that good night', in 1952, *In country sleep, and other poems*, New Directions, New York, p. 18.



understand the importance of ‘recognizing the value of the present instant.’<sup>191</sup> Boltanski’s work, *The Life of C.B.* will be composed of millions, of ‘present instants’ or fragments, and despite the stated aim of the work, to create a portrait of the disintegration of the artist from 2010 to death, all that can ever be observed is the instant, the moment the viewer stands in front of the work. When the artist has passed, the re-presentation of those present moments is the curatorial conundrum for the future.

I tell Boltanski that prior to my departure I visited the bunker at MONA. As I prepared to take an iPhone photograph documenting *The Life of C.B.* I responded instinctually by inviting a third party to take the photograph ensuring that part of my body was captured in the photograph with the work in order to create a document of proof that I was there. The question in my mind was this. If I was not captured in the picture, was I really there? Might I just as easily have scanned the image from a book or compiled a fictional story about viewing the work? The artist nods in agreement saying that he felt this action was an extremely important device to identify the idea of being and the state one might be in. ‘If you do not *see* it is not there,’ he says, ‘you are not there.’<sup>192</sup> In her book *On Photography* (1977), Sontag says ‘... the camera record justifies. A photograph passes for incontrovertible proof that a given thing happened.’ Photographs, she says ‘...furnish evidence. Something we hear about, but doubt, seems proven when we’re shown a photograph of it.’<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Hadot, P, Davidson, AI (ed.), Chase, M (translation) 1995, *Philosophy as a way of life: spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, p. 217.

<sup>192</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 12 October.

<sup>193</sup> Sontag, S 1977, *On photography*, Picador, New York, p. 5.



PLATE 17 IMAGES 38-41

Christian Boltanski, *The Life of C.B.*, 2010- ,

© the artist, images courtesy of MONA, Museum of Old and New Art

As the interview concluded Christian Boltanski handed me two folded posters. The imagery is of *Personnes* his huge installation work for *Monumenta*, 2010.<sup>194</sup> For *Personnes* Boltanski created a grid filled with clothing representing past lives. The grid spread north, south, east and west, like neat vegetable garden beds along the arms of the Grand Palais. Under the dome a massive pile of clothing was arranged, many metres in height. The pile of clothing was ‘ruled’ by an active crane whose movement constantly disrupted the composition. Grenier says of this work, ‘...some individuals may occasionally be selected and raised up, [by the crane] but only by chance and for just a very brief time, and at the end they return to the communal heap...a fundamental interrogation of human nature.’<sup>195</sup> Before leaving I turn, lift my camera to my eye – eye to eye with the CCTV camera positioned behind me – click. Images are silently streamed to MONA. My gestural intervention is complete. As he walked me to the door Boltanski said his problem was that he could not speak English. I said his conversational English was good.

<sup>194</sup> *Monumenta* is an ongoing series of commissioned exhibitions, the first held in 2007. A single artist is invited to create a work that will fill the vast (or monumental) capacity of the Grand Palais in Paris.

<sup>195</sup> Grenier, C, Mendelsohn, D (interview), Radzinowicz, D (translation) 2010, *Christian Boltanski: there's a story...* Flammarion, S.A., Paris, p. 135.

He shrugged and said, ‘No.’<sup>196</sup> I walked down the lane thinking about the effort Boltanski constantly makes in a language with which he struggles. If it was not for his older brother Jean-Elie Boltanski, he may not have been able to speak English at all. It was the older Boltanski who insisted, when the two were young, that they converse in English for part of each day while the young Christian painted.<sup>197</sup>

It was not the financial arrangement with David Walsh, or the mythology surrounding *The Life of C.B.* that interested me. Rather it was the unembellished idea of the work. As Hans-Ulrich Obrist says the work is:

...an exemplary reimagining and reconfiguration of both the art object and the exhibition format – and, quite simply, an ingenious change to the rules of the game, moving the traditional art-historical theme of vanitas, an idea that runs throughout Boltanski’s oeuvre, towards the production of unforeseen artistic encounters.<sup>198</sup>

In his review of the major exhibition *Exposed: Voyeurism, Surveillance and the Camera* at Tate Modern, Adrian Searle, the chief art critic of The Guardian newspaper in Britain, claimed there was a bias within the exhibition towards American artists and that the balance could readily have been redressed with certain inclusions. One such inclusion he suggested was *The Life of C.B.* ‘French artist Christian Boltanski is about to record his every move, day and night, on camera, a live feed going to a collector’s bunker, until the artist’s death – a work that does not appear in the show, and which should.’ Searle also went on to say that the exhibition concluded with a work by Thomas Demand, a film of a moving CCTV camera. He says we, ‘...look up at it; it looks blindly down at us. It is worth remembering that in Tate Modern there are cameras everywhere; weep in front of a Rothko, and someone in a back room will be watching. In the age of Facebook, YouTube and reality TV, many people don’t seem to care how much of themselves they expose. And in the end, maybe we are all looking.’<sup>199</sup>

The day after the interview I visited the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris to view The Boltanski Gallery located exactly where the artist wishes to be, a secret to be discovered, in the basement of the museum. Its connected rooms are a treasure trove of pared down iconic works, (*Telephone Subscribers*, 2000, *The Storeroom of the Children’s Museum I and II*, 1989, *Shadows Theatre*, 1984-1997) memorabilia in display cases and early films.

<sup>196</sup> Transcript of the interview with Christian Boltanski is included in the appendix.

<sup>197</sup> Grenier, C, Sante, L (foreword) 2009, *The possible life of Christian Boltanski*, MFA Publications, Boston, p. 27.

<sup>198</sup> Obrist, HU 2011, Christian Boltanski, *The life of C.B.*, in ‘2010-Present’, in Birnbaum, D, Cotter, S, et al 2011, *Defining contemporary art – 25 years in 200 pivotal artworks*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, p. 452.

<sup>199</sup> Searle, A 2010, ‘Art review: exposed at Tate Modern’, *The Guardian*, viewed 12 April 2011, <<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/may/27/exposed-photography-tate-modern>>.



PLATE 18 IMAGES 42-44

The Boltanski Gallery, basement, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de, Paris  
 Christian Boltanski, *Storeroom of the Children's Museum I and II*, 1989 and *Telephone Subscribers*, 2000  
 iPhone images Greer Honeywill and Ross Honeywill

On Monday 17 October I travelled to Venice to attend the Venice Biennale and view *Chance*, 2011, the Christian Boltanski work that filled the entire French Pavilion, the artist having been awarded the honour of representing his country.



PLATE 19 IMAGE 45

The French Pavilion, Giardini, Venice, 2011, iPhone image Greer Honeywill

*Chance* presented as a massive, loud, fast moving and immersive installation that filled the entire main hall of the French Pavilion and the three side rooms. Upon entry the spectator unwittingly walked into the midst of this all-consuming monster. In the main hall the *Wheel of Fortune* is configured as a maze-like structure reaching the four walls and ceiling, rather like the structure of vast newspaper printing presses. The mechanical dinosaur stopping intermittently (by chance) to highlight the face of a single baby, one of the many infant portraits making up the huge, racing, ribbon of faces that circulates around and above the spectator. On each occasion the pause is preceded by the sound of a loud bell familiar in newspaper print factories. This process repeats over and over again, each time the machine stopping at random. 'Then,



the baby's face appears on a monitor. One child is chosen by chance, for better or worse. His life is still just a blank page,' Boltanski says in the catalogue.<sup>200</sup>

The naturally occurring sound of this work in operation is an important animator of the space, bringing to life the power of the press-like machine in the imagination of the spectator as it fast tracks the faces of the newborn. The sound also draws the spectator's attention to the images. Boltanski sourced his photographic material by cutting the portraits from newspapers and reprinting them – originally obituaries (for works such as *Dead Swiss*, 1990, and *Menschilich*, 1994) and later birth notices, a practice he began in the late eighties.<sup>201</sup> These photographs have been used and reused over decades, part of his archive of raw materials infused with emotion. As Didier Semin wrote in his essay for the monograph, *Christian Boltanski* (1997), 'If Boltanski's sources in his photography are clearly the press, sales catalogues and amateur photographs, the attention to these popular sources is itself a clearly identifiable influence of the age.'<sup>202</sup>

In the two side rooms *Last News From Humans* presents as two digital counters that click over to match the rate of births [displayed in green] and deaths [displayed in red] occurring in the world.<sup>203</sup> *Be New*, in the third side gallery, is an interactive game further exploring chance. 'The faces of sixty Polish newborns and fifty-two deceased Swiss are cut into three parts.' The segments flash onto the screen at high speed. By pressing a button, the spectator can randomly form new beings. This is the format of the daily on-line game devised by Boltanski. The artist says, '...if by chance a coherent face is formed with all three parts belonging to the one person, music plays and the spectator wins the work.'<sup>204</sup>

<sup>200</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, *Chance*, newspaper-style exhibition catalogue, 4 June-27 November, 2011, French Pavilion, 54th Venice Biennale 2011, Venice, Italy p. 7.

The newspaper includes a self-interrogative interview with Christian Boltanski, David Walsh and Jean-Hubert Martin, a playful interview that does not cite the interviewer or the respondent/s.

<sup>201</sup> Grenier, C, Mendelsohn, D (interview), Radzinowicz, D (translation) 2010, *Christian Boltanski: there's a story...* Flammarion, S.A., Paris, pp. 66-71.

<sup>202</sup> Semin, D, Garb, T, & Kuspit, D 1997, *Christian Boltanski*, Phaidon Press Limited, New York, p. 72.

<sup>203</sup> During the interview with Christian Boltanski I asked what the numbers of births and deaths were per day. He could not bring them to mind immediately but said he has looked for the numbers on the Internet. After the interview I searched the Internet. Statistics vary across sites however perhaps a more reliable site is the World Health Organization which bases its numbers on a 1997 statistic quoting births at 365,000 and deaths at 140,000 per day (www.WHO I 50 Facts: Global health situation and trends 1955-2025). In general sites quote between 358,192 and 367,000 births per day and between 150, 000 and 154, 889 deaths each day although the figures are almost impossible to define correctly.

<sup>204</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, *Chance*, newspaper-style exhibition catalogue, 4 June-27 November, 2011, French Pavilion, 54th Venice Biennale 2011, Venice, Italy, p. 7.



PLATE 20 IMAGES 46-49

Christian Boltanski, *Chance*, 2011, French Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2011  
 iPhone images Ross Honeywill

Hans-Ulrich Obrist claims that, ‘Boltanski’s works are attempts to reach limits and to suggest alterations, novelties, changes, introductions, departures and variations.’ He goes on to quote the artist as saying:

I think each work of art operates within a set of rules or within a code, and the most touching, the most moving works of art are those that create, inside those rules, a sort of slight break.<sup>205</sup>

As an aside, in 2014 *Chance* came to Australia. This is the first time a major work by the artist has been shown in this country. *Chance* was reconfigured and installed in Carriageworks, as part of the Sydney Festival (9-26 January, 2014) with an extended season until 23 March. The cavernous space of Carriageworks, formerly part of the Evanleigh (Railway) Carriage Workshops was built in 1888. Sitting outside of the white box gallery convention the space is infused with atmospheres – memories of steam driven dreams and history – the kind of space Boltanski relishes. I experienced the work on Tuesday 21 January 2014.

<sup>205</sup> Christian Boltanski in conversation with Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Paris, August 1994, in Cotter, S, Gioni, M, et al, 2011, *Defining contemporary art: 25 years in 200 pivotal artworks*, Phaidon Press, London, p. 452.



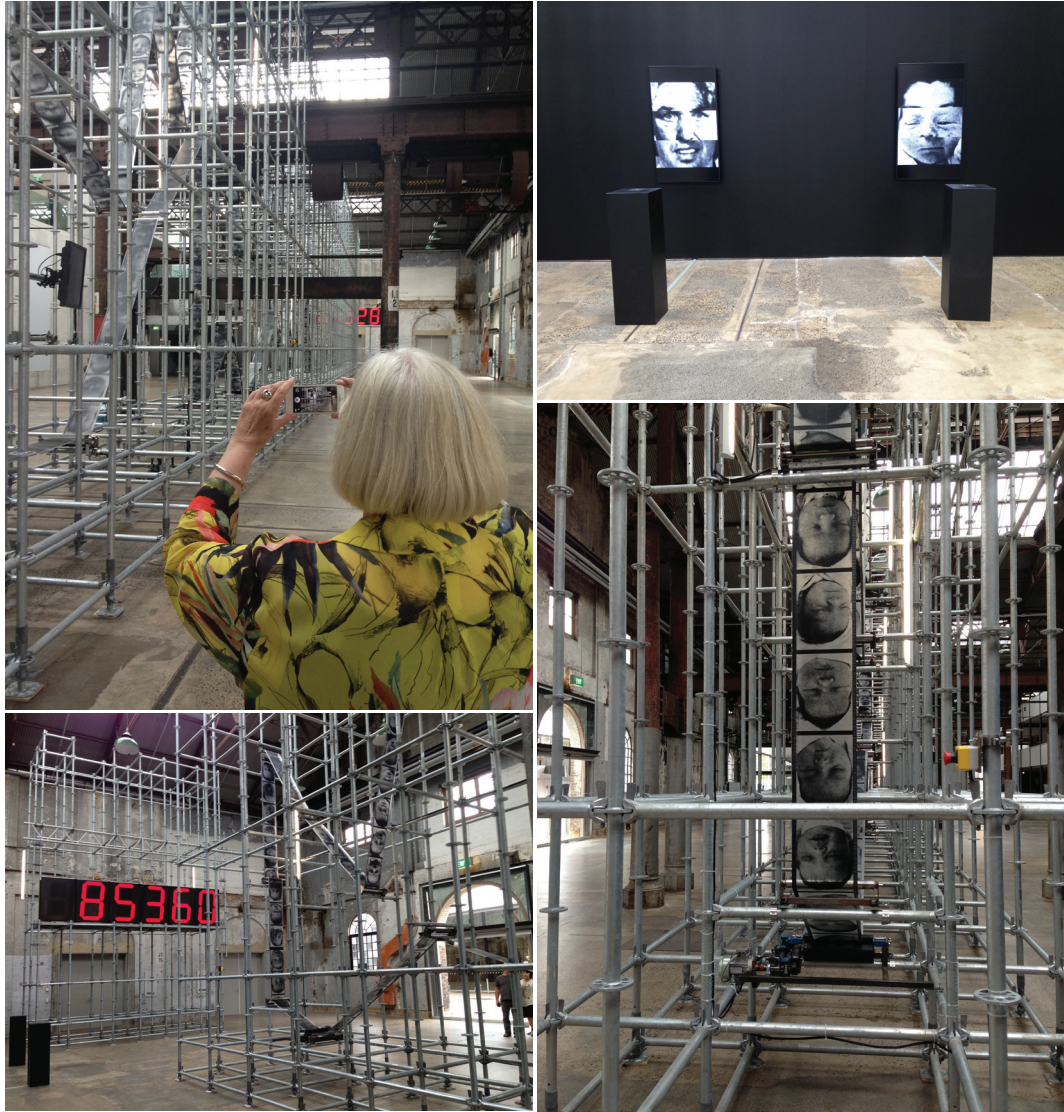


PLATE 21 IMAGES 50-53

Christian Boltanski, *Chance*, 2011- , Carriageworks, Sydney  
 iPhone images Greer Honeywill and Ross Honeywill

Returning to Hobart from Paris and Venice the technicians at MONA provide me with stills from the streamed footage in which I appeared. The circle of disruption is completed. In my hand I had proof of my existence at that moment. I look at the images and I look back from the images. These are not merely stills they are present moments of my life blinked into existence. As Casey has said, ‘...just as moments and instants in their pointed and spotty ways *cut up time*, so glances *sever space*...creating’ instants in which the ‘...now and the here comingle, making space and time confluent in one gleaming moment’.<sup>206</sup>

*The Life of C.B.* is a deceptive work. While it may appear modest in its nine-screen presentation

<sup>206</sup> Casey, ES 2007, *The world at a glance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, pp. 17-18.

the work is actually built on a grand scale. Susan Sontag once said, ‘...the most grandiose result of the photographic enterprise is to give us the sense that we can hold the whole world in our heads – as an anthology of images.’<sup>207</sup> While Sontag was not thinking of *The Life of C.B.* when she made that comment it nevertheless holds true. Buried somewhere in the archive is ninety minutes of my life spent in Christian Boltanski’s studio as if it is another universe. Walsh is betting that Boltanski will die within eight years which means at some time in 2018 depending on what was considered the exact purchase date. Given that Boltanski and I are of a similar age perhaps I too will die within eight years.

Where do I reside in the archive? In January 2015 the work will have been in operation twenty-four hours a day for four years since the opening of MONA in 2011. That is approximately 105,120 hours or 6,307,200 minutes. This figure places my ninety minutes in the artist’s studio in context. I am a fragment. And I would reply to Susan Sontag (if I could) that my head is aching just trying to imagine the whole archive. Like insights into private spaces offered by reality TV, spectators to the *The Life of C.B.* witness continuous fragments on nine screens – always fragments of an unseen whole. We know conceptually that this is a portrait in progress as we blink the fragments into existence, although we cannot reverse the imagery to compare today with what has gone before and we cannot advance into an imagined future. All that we have when we look at this accumulating portrait is the moment in which the ‘now and the here coming.’<sup>208</sup> As Pierre Hadot says ‘...we possess the whole of reality within the present instant, and even infinite duration could not give us more than what we have right now.’<sup>209</sup>

Back in the studio I considered what form the exhibitable proof of my presence and intervention would take. It would not be the CCTV images themselves that was not their purpose. However, one of the images captured me in the performance of my gestural intervention an action that heralds the beginning of the layering of reciprocal echoes. As Elkins says, ‘I send out a version of myself, and I watch as its echoes come back to me.’<sup>210</sup> In order to play with this fragment, to emphasise my intervention, I have cut myself from the still and blown up the tiny image to my full height (which is 1660 mm) an action that invites chance occurrences as it places a great strain on the low resolution image, causing pixilation and the loss of detail. What is left however, is a ghostly, fluid, figure that the eye strains to repair. Elkins believes:

Our eyes are built to seek out complete figures...We instinctively repair fragments into wholes and search for continuous contours and closed curves. Shards present our eyes

<sup>207</sup> Sontag, S 1977, *On photography*, Picador, New York, p. 3.

<sup>208</sup> Casey, ES 2007, *The world at a glance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, pp. 17-18.

<sup>209</sup> Hadot, P, Davidson, AI (ed.), Chase, M (translation) 1995, *Philosophy as a way of life: spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, p. 228.

<sup>210</sup> Elkins, J 1998, *The object stares back*, Harvest edition published by arrangement with Simon & Schuster, New York, p. 71.

with a problem, and unwittingly we cast around for patterns, assembling pieces into shapes.<sup>211</sup>

I was a documenter but in the process I too have been documented, captured and archived somewhere within the massive output of streamed footage – fragments of the present moment from which the work *The Life of C.B.* is composed. And I also persist as a blow-up cut from the stream as art historian Keith Broadfoot would say, ‘like...some specially preserved archeological fragment...’<sup>212</sup> In reference to this strange echoing, this doubling, I have appropriated the title of Michelangelo Antonioni’s (1912-2007) film, *Blow-Up*, 1966, a film about looking, photographic capture and proof of existence.

Australian academic Andrew McNamara says the 1960s ushered in a, ‘...preponderance of mirrors in the art of the period...’ and this suggests, ‘...an intense focus upon visual perception of some kind...Like cameras, mirrors are apparatuses of perception – they stage seeing...’<sup>213</sup> In the exhibitable document the ghostly, fluid figure of the photographer will be printed onto adhesive vinyl adhered to a ground of mirror finish stainless steel. The reflective ground will be composed of nine pieces of mirror, each 70cm square, completing a final measurement of 2.1m x 2.1m. In the gallery the spectator will be implicated. Gathered into the work, standing beside me, the moment they move into the mirror gaze. Andrew McNamara, in his essay about the artist Ian Burn (1939-1993) says ‘...viewers may wonder: where is the best place to stand to access this work? Where do I focus?’<sup>214</sup> Spectators to this work may think the same thing.

<sup>211</sup> Elkins, J 1998, *The object stares back*, Harvest edition published by arrangement with Simon & Schuster, New York, p. 125.

<sup>212</sup> Stephen, A (curatory), Broadfoot, K, & McNamara, A (essays) 2009, *Mirror mirror: then and now*, exhibition catalogue, touring exhibition, 24 October-12 December 2009, Institute of Modern Art, Queensland, AUS, 4 January-2 May 2010, University Art Gallery, University of Sydney, AUS, 14 May-16 July 2010, Samstag Museum of Art, Adelaide, AUS, p. 21.

<sup>213</sup> Stephen, A (curatory), Broadfoot, K, & McNamara, A (essays) 2009, *Mirror mirror: then and now*, exhibition catalogue, touring exhibition, 24 October-12 December 2009, Institute of Modern Art, Queensland, AUS, 4 January-2 May 2010, University Art Gallery, University of Sydney, AUS, 14 May-16 July 2010, Samstag Museum of Art, Adelaide, AUS, p. 25.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., p. 26.



## PLATE 22 IMAGES 54-55

Christian Boltanski, *The Life of C.B.*, 2010- ,

© the artist, image courtesy of MONA, Museum of Old and New Art

Greer Honeywill, *Blow-Up*, work in progress September 2014

It was not until I had made all of the decisions that I found a reference to Michelangelo Pistoletto (1933- ) who began working with mirror finish stainless steel and photographs of figures in the 1960s. Pistoletto has continued, over more than five decades, to remain fascinated by the way in which the spectator becomes a part of the work as do the features of the gallery. While I was unfamiliar with the work of Pistoletto I acknowledge that we arrived at a similar place in the history of ideas albeit half a century apart.



# 03

## 03 The Gathered Fragment, the Camera and the Act of Walking

To be “outside” is to be in the image, to be seen, whether in the press photograph, a magazine, a movie, on television, or at your window.

– BEATRIZ COLOMINA<sup>215</sup>

This chapter returns to the studio and the making of two works influenced by Christian Boltanski’s use of CCTV cameras to gather fragments of ordinary life as it is lived. In a sense I am playing with Boltanski’s concept. The method for what became two works begins with an archive of fragments exemplifying ordinary acts of living directly related to my life, using the CCTV camera as a means of gathering. French installation artist, Annette Messager (1943- ) remarked recently that, ‘...the fantastic is in daily life; real life is more extraordinary than all the imagination.’<sup>216</sup> And, like Boltanski, I too am making a mirror, a portrait of sorts.

In my constant watching from the kitchen window, just as I watched the magic of a toy mirror twirling in a pile of derelict birdcages, I also watched the street activity. As architectural theorist, Beatriz Colomina says it is, ‘...the passer-by who is really exposed in the suburbs, subjected to the hidden eyes behind the window, every venetian blind, every curtain.’<sup>217</sup> For the passer-by, the walker, the suburbs are quite different from the city. Colomina says that in the city Walter Benjamin’s *flâneur*, ‘...could hide while contemplating the spectacle. In the suburbs, the situation has been reversed, the Pedestrian is now exposed, scrutinized by eyes behind every window, eyes that you don’t see, and that, as Sartre pointed out, do not need to be there to be felt.’<sup>218</sup> Taking Casey’s words and applying them to the physical experience of my everyday street, I do as he did, ‘I glance along the street on which I walk, I take in people and buildings in one fell swoop. In both cases, I effect a special form of visual montage, a

<sup>215</sup> Colomina, B 1994, *Privacy and publicity: modern architecture as mass media*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, p. 7.

<sup>216</sup> Messager, A 2014, *Motion/emotion*, exhibition catalogue, 24 June-27 October 2014, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, AUS, p. 12.

<sup>217</sup> Pelzer, B, Francis, M & Colomina, B 2001, *Dan Graham*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, p. 82.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

colportage of images on the spot: in this place, with one glance.<sup>219</sup> I take in the histories that I have learned compiling a mental layering of the past, the specific site and the present moment – everything at once in one place in one glance.<sup>220</sup>

There are many terms applied to the elemental act of walking – rambling, meandering, strolling, idling, sauntering, perambulating and the list goes on – and I could see from my window a variety of walking styles. What is important in this scenario is not merely the musculoskeletal activity it is what is happening in the brain, in the focus of the eye and in the imagination that can make the simple act of walking important. Walking can be a portal to the other. Like the experience of wonder, walking is a beginning that has the potential to convey the walker to another universe of the mind. Merlin Coverley says:

For millennia the act of walking and the bodily rhythms it incorporates have been felt to somehow reflect or engender the mental process of abstract thought, as if the metronomic beat of the walker's step could mark time, shaping the thoughts it provokes into a coherent narrative.<sup>221</sup>

And further, as he developed his *Arcades Project* Walter Benjamin, 'sought the fate of the sudden and the surprising...delivered in glances cast while walking on the streets of Paris.'<sup>222</sup>

Streets are familiar 'stages' to me, having created and directed large-scale, Fluxus-style works in the streets and public spaces of Adelaide in the nineteen seventies and eighties for the *Come Out Festival*, the *Adelaide Festival* and the *Sixth World Three Day Event Championships*. These were large performative interventions into public space (the largest consisting of 7,000 performers) changing, albeit briefly, the meaning and activity of *street*. Among other things these events focused on the act of walking for the performers and the many thousands of spectators who came on foot to view the performances along the designated routes.

The digital moving image work, influenced by *The Life of C.B.*, began to develop under the working title *Walking the Dog* perhaps the most common activity viewed from my kitchen window. The work would catalogue the journey each performer made as they traversed my front fence. An adult takes approximately twenty-one seconds from the point of appearance, as if from no-where, to traverse my fence line and then disappear just as suddenly. Everything that I would ever know about the performer and the performance would happen in thirty-six steps and twenty-one seconds. Runners, joggers and bicycle riders would take less time while children would most likely take longer. Time however, is only one measure of what is

<sup>219</sup> Casey, ES 2007, *The world at a glance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p. 237.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., p. 237.

<sup>221</sup> Coverley, M 2012, *The art of wandering: the writer as walker*, Oldcastle Books, Harpenden, p. 12.

<sup>222</sup> Casey, ES 2007, *The world at a glance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p. 215.



seen and recognised. *Walking the Dog* would be a performative work, using the natural cast of players, the inhabitants of the street. By inhabitants I do not mean the people who necessarily live in the houses in the street rather the people who enter willingly into the public spectacle of the street as part of their daily routine. The work would take the form of a document of unanticipated present instants. The gradual materialisation of the performers reflected through the lens of the camera and their subsequent dematerialisation. It is this moment, without a coherent beginning or end, according to Hadot, that possesses the whole of reality.<sup>223</sup>

Roger Shattuck talks about the ‘absolute’ fragment which ‘remains isolated and cannot find its way into any larger order of things...It’s self-containment...’ failing to, ‘...lead back to the circles of nature and knowledge...’, while the ‘implicate’ fragment leads a totally different life. Shattuck refers to the archaeologist building a whole vessel from a tiny fragment. ‘In this perspective,’ he says ‘nothing stands alone, and the tiniest fragment of the universe breathes forth its secret connections to everything else.’<sup>224</sup> American academic J. Sage Elwell, in commenting on Roger Shattuck’s larger theory of the fragment expressed in, *The Innocent Eye: On Modern Literature & The Arts* (1984) says:

Shattuck writes “that that the ambiguous fragment stands...on the frontier between meaninglessness and deep metaphysical significance.” This is why the ambiguous fragment lies between unity and isolation, identity and difference. As a complete fragment, or whole-part, it expresses an equivalence among all parts inasmuch as each is complete in and of itself – each ambiguous fragment is a “whole” fragment.<sup>225</sup>

While I cannot see the complete journey undertaken by each performer, they are inescapably connected to a whole. A whole composed of many fragments each fragment deciphered by others at different points of the walk. Are the walkers as keenly observed in other sections of their walk? John Berger has said, the glance that connects with, in this case, the walkers at various points of their walk becomes, ‘information of a sort, and, like all information, it is either put to use or ignored...’<sup>226</sup> For me the observation of the fragment is more powerful than the whole because in that instant without past or future, as Hadot suggests, ‘...we possess the totality of the universe.’<sup>227</sup> I have no real need to know the whole – instead value is placed on the fragment, the transforming moment, isolated from the whole. And as Shattuck suggests, ‘...the real appeal of the fragment...lies in its ambiguity.’<sup>228</sup> I do not know where the performers on

<sup>223</sup> Hadot, P, Davidson, AI (ed.), Chase, M (translation) 1995, *Philosophy as a way of life: spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, p. 228.

<sup>224</sup> Shattuck, R 1984, *The innocent eye: on modern literature & the arts*, Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, p. 37.

<sup>225</sup> Elwell, JS 2010, *Crisis of transcendence: a theology of digital art and culture*, Lexington Books, Lanham, pp. 99-100.

<sup>226</sup> Berger, J 1972, *Ways of seeing*, Penguin Books and the BBC, London, p. 24.

<sup>227</sup> Hadot, P, Davidson, AI (ed.), Chase, M (translation) 1995, *Philosophy as a way of life: spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, p. 229.

<sup>228</sup> Shattuck, R 1984, *The innocent eye: on modern literature & the arts*, Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, p. 38.

the stage that is my street come from or where they go. I merely glimpse a moment of life lived in the performance of a walk. An activity the performers enjoy – a public activity, in a public place. Each walk is different and each walker experiences a different state of mind. Rebecca Solnit reminds us that walking is in the main a practical activity:

...the unconsidered locomotive means between two sites. To make walking into an investigation, a ritual, a meditation, is a special subset of walking, physiologically like and philosophically unlike the way the mail carrier brings the mail and the office worker reaches the train. Which is to say that the subject of walking is, in some sense, about how we invest universal acts with particular meanings.<sup>229</sup>

There are no secrets shared in this work, no revelations, rather a gathering of rhythms, patterns and the flickering juxtaposition of humans against the *painted* backdrop of the constructed landscape of a suburb, itself a fragment of the labyrinth of the city. A patchwork of gathered fragments, moments that tantalize.

My suburban street is not distinctive. It is a street that might be mirrored in many Australian suburbs and in other places such as British Columbia, parts of the United States or England. The built form and the general presentation of the street, is neat, cared for, ordinary. Much of the built form originated seventy-five years ago as the walnut groves, poisoned by leachate from the local wood mill, gave way to housing. There are no *McMansions* here, just a civilized street lined with houses between a main thoroughfare and the river. A place that engenders a feeling of security and peace or as much security and peace as can be felt in contemporary disruptive society. Shattuck talks about the kind of beauty intrinsic to this street and the neighbouring streets. He says the fact that much of what is said, ‘...about beauty and its importance in our lives ignores the minimal beauty of the unpretentious street...’ He adds that the beauty inherent in ordinary things, ‘these minimal beauties’ as he refers to the ordinary street, ‘... are far more important to our daily lives, and far more intricately involved in our rational decisions, than the great works... They are part of the context in which we live our lives, and our desire for harmony, fittingness and civility is both expressed and confirmed in them.’<sup>230</sup>

Tasmanian curator and writer Seán Kelly wrote in the introduction to the exhibition catalogue for *Reflections*:

Measuring, recording, tracking, naming – these are all methods and systems of the explorer and they combine in a variety of ways in the construction of a layered unfolding of those features which define one place from another – at the same time they seek to familiarize the experience by locating it through objective instruments of record, common to all

<sup>229</sup> Solnit, R 2001, *Wanderlust: a history of walking*, Penguin Books, New York, p. 3.

<sup>230</sup> Scruton, R 2011, *Beauty: a very short introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 10.

investigations.<sup>231</sup>

My method of gathering would be a single CCTV camera operational for a limited time (one month). The camera would be located on private property where it would watch from the corner of its *eye* for human interventions into public space – its lens a mirror to the world. The camera was installed parallel to a garage door where it looked sympathetically at the roller door concealing a small studio. However, the lens revealed more than a garage door from its shy, elevated position. Because of the curvature of the street a strange cocktail of angles revealed my fence-line, the footpath, and the streetscape across the road. The image slipping from sharp to uncertain as the distance increased. In his paper *Photography and Representation*, (1981) Roger Scruton captures my approach to setting the camera view. While the actual placement of the CCTV camera limited adjustments, Scruton's description remains pertinent:

I mark out a certain spot from which a particular view of the street may be obtained. I then place a frame before that spot. I move the frame so that, from the chosen spot, only certain parts of the street are visible, others are cut off. I do this with all the skill available to me, so that what is seen in the frame is as pleasing as it might be: the buildings within the frame seem to harmonize, the ugly tower that dominates the street is cut off from view, the centre of the composition is the little lane between two classical facades which might otherwise have gone unnoticed, and so on.<sup>232</sup>

Important to the composition is a large street tree. It is one of a series planted on the north-western side of the street twenty years ago – the side without the electrical poles. Like so many street trees planted as young biddable saplings it has outgrown its relationship to even the two-storied built form. It was planted with good intent, no matter how misguided, and it has grown, it is healthy and I protect it vigorously despite the fact that the roots are destroying my seventy-five-year-old brick fence and the footpath needs constant repairs. The street tree breathes life into this work. The tree, this Liquidambar (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), is a sentinel, a barometer of breeze, demonstrating a gentle atmospheric presence or alternatively indicating the presence of the swirling harpy that visits occasional tumultuous blasts like a speeding car at a raceway. And the tree is a marker of place. It extends proudly above the footpath with its toe metaphorically in the ground water, a silent witness to all. This tree and its movement occupies centre stage in the on-screen framing for *Walking the Dog*, its trunk a constant temptation for the passing beasts.

There is a palpable sadness, a felt absence, in the street when it is not in use. At these times the scars of more than seven decades of habitation appear more obvious. This absence is alleviated

<sup>231</sup> Kelly, S & Zika, P (curators), Kelly, S (introduction), Malpas, J (essay) 2008, *Repetitions*, exhibition catalogue, 5 April-25 April 2008, Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, AUS, p. 2.

<sup>232</sup> Scruton, R 1981, 'Photography and representation', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 7, no. 3, University of Chicago Press, p. 596.

by small happenings like the ever-changing light conditions, typical of Hobart. Occasionally detritus left over from rubbish collection swirled balletically as if orchestrated to break the monotony. Subtle happenings like a bird pecking about the base of the street tree absently looking for something or the neighbour's cat looking out from between the bars of our gate before deciding it was safe to move onto the footpath. While this world looks static between walkers the street is rarely still. The tree is always heaving – breathing. In the afternoon the tree casts shadow across the footpath and the cast of performers move in and out of the darkened pool. The human performers are relaxed in their routine – the walking, the intent, the rhythm and the embroidering of their patterns, rain or shine. They are never in a hurry (unless they are runners) nor do they dawdle, they set a purposeful pace, a pleasurable pace, as they negotiate their familiar journey. I know nothing of the path they travel all I have ever known is the glimpsed fragment.

The month of January 2013 did not bring the much-anticipated sun. From the beginning of work on this project I was wrong about the activity on the street. I saw walkers and dogs and the occasional solo walker traverse my fence line and I allowed this movement to obscure the reality. On closer inspection there were family groups, bike riders and motorised vehicles conveying people with limited mobility. I saw joggers, runners, lovers, elderly people wellness walking, and vibrant groups of young people. And irritatingly there were lots of cars. Acknowledging the wider world of activity I changed the title to *Walking the Dog (and other things)*.

Gathering of data began on Wednesday 24 January 2013 at 12.52pm. Thereafter on each successive day data was collected from 7.00am to 8.00pm. During the process of gathering I would often sit in my studio, the re-cast garage, watching on a laptop which showed the live view from the camera, the view I could have seen if I stood in the garden allowing my glance to slide across the trees, the brick fence, the houses across the road. Even in the live view the field of vision is constrained by trees to the left and the garages to the right. But the garden view was not the view I desired. As Scruton described, the camera lens tightened focus, excluded the big sky, the ugly tops of power poles and electrical paraphernalia, and showed me a new reality, a world at once familiar and yet unfamiliar. Although I knew all of the physical elements of this scene I did not know this view. It was real and yet unreal. I was made to see this place in a new way because the view on the live screen was reversed due to a compatibility problem with the technology, something that could easily be put right at the edit stage. Malpas, in his catalogue essay for *Repetitions*, says:

Wherever we are, *where we are* is always some place, though the place may be one that remains unknown, un-named, uncertain. Whatever the place, no matter how familiar, no matter how close to home, a strangeness, an uncanniness belongs to it...In the encounter with place, and with our own placedness, what is encountered is itself a secret, something

that remains hidden, a mystery, something that resists understanding. One cannot come to a sense of a place without also coming to a sense of one's own implication in that place...<sup>233</sup>

These words reflect my visual and visceral response to a reversed image of the streetscape that I think I know but can never really know. And these words relate equally to the walkers who pass in and out of place as they perambulate along the street, '...familiarity may appear as unfamiliar and disorienting...' Malpas contends.<sup>234</sup> No doubt the uncanny qualities of the reversed image would apply even if the image were not reversed because the camera changes the view as decisions are made about framing. As the patterns of feet move through space, the performers create rhythms that rise and fall, the aftershock hanging in the air like the anticipation of the next event. I sat at the laptop watching and listening to the footsteps of the walkers, their voices, the sniffing of the dogs, and the light beat of the runners as they passed on the other side of the roller door. I thought of Hermoine Lee's book, *Virginia Woolf* (1996). Lee says Woolf demonstrated in her work *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) her '...unerring ability to articulate the walker's vision of the street.'<sup>235</sup> She also recognized the sounds of the walker environment, the tone and music, often calling '...the noise of the street a kind of language.'<sup>236</sup> As I sat at the computer I was sensing this language as Woolf had done.

In the intervals between events I watched the street. Not all of the walkers returned by the same path. Where did they go if they did not return? Were the performers aware of the way in which they embroidered the street? Do they seek to copy their last trajectory or change it? I have noticed that some change their pattern depending on the time of day and which side of the road is in shadow. Most walk on the footpath on each side of the road and on occasion individuals create their own disruptions to the pattern by crossing the road or walking on the road. In conversation with Jeff Malpas he referred to the layering of each journey as a 'palimpsest.' He likened the surface of the footpath to a manuscript page from which the text has been scraped or washed off so it can be used again, just like the street, again and again 'it washes clear' and the new cast of the day walk on.<sup>237</sup> And this relates to Boltanski's idea of a score. The street activity repeats but chance plays a role because each performance is different. The order can never be quite the same even for the regular walkers.

<sup>233</sup> Kelly, S & Zika, P (curators), Kelly, S (introduction), Malpas, J (essay) 2008, *Repetitions*, exhibition catalogue, 5 April-25 April 2008, Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, AUS, pp. 6-10.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>235</sup> Lee, H 1996, *Virginia Woolf*, London: Chatto & Windus, London, p. 552.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., p. 552.

<sup>237</sup> Malpas, J 2013, informal conversation with Greer Honeywill, 19 July.



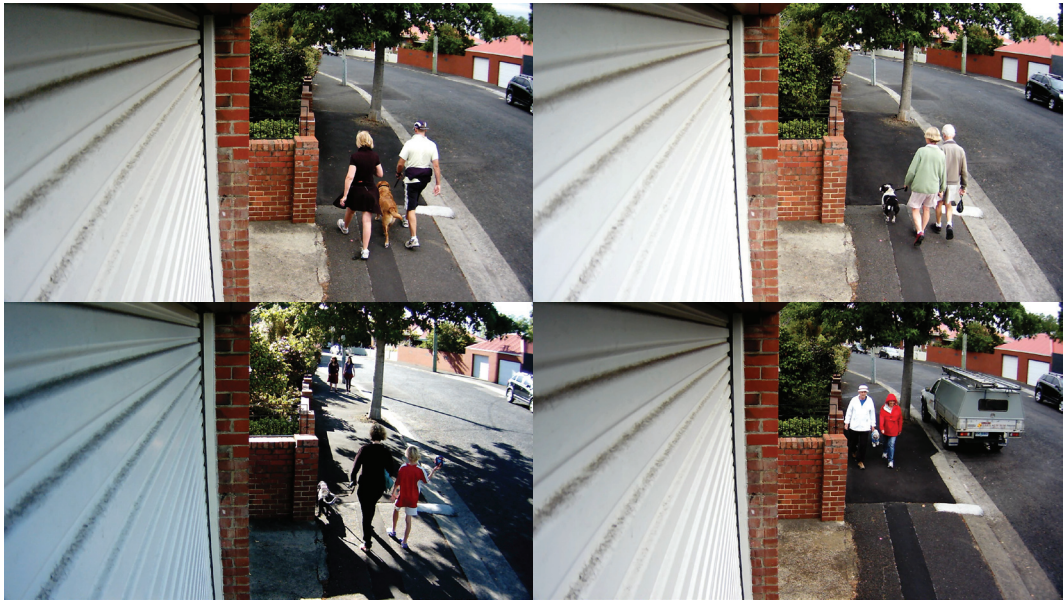


PLATE 23 IMAGES 56-59

Greer Honeywill, *Walking the Dog (and other things)*, work in progress, March 2013

In the early stages of this project the world of walking, which has become a monumental obsession in countries such as England and France, began to open up to me. British author Iain Sinclair says of England, ‘...the country is black with people walking to write books. It is now so commonplace there needs to be ever more extremes discovered.’<sup>238</sup> People walk to heal, to think, to know themselves, to reflect, to imagine, to create and to experience other times. It is interesting that the traditional stops on the ancient pilgrimage routes across England and Europe are now being restored where traces still exist, because people are demanding to experience other times and the well worn path travelled by walkers that led to writings such as Chaucer’s, *The Canterbury Tales*. Today people are walking back to the Middle Ages and beyond, back to ancient Greece. Is it legend or truth that Aristotle taught by walking backwards and forwards in hallways with his students? Perhaps in this regard the Enlightenment philosopher, composer and writer Jean-Jacques Rousseau shares some common ground with Aristotle. In the introduction to *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* (2011), published after Rousseau’s death in 1778, translator Russell Goulbourne quotes the author as saying ‘I can meditate only when walking; as soon as I stop, I can no longer think, for my mind moves only when my feet do.’<sup>239</sup> Goulbourne continues, ‘...journeys he seems to prefer are those guided by chance: he delights in peripatetic randomness, or what he calls “...the pleasures of going one knows not where” ...

<sup>238</sup> Sinclair, I, in *Patience (after Sebald)* 2012, video, Cinema Guild, UK. Directed by Grant Lee.

<sup>239</sup> Rousseau, JJ, Goulbourne, R (translation & introduction) 2011, *Reveries of the solitary walker* (1782), Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. xvii.

but always in the country, the natural landscape.<sup>240</sup> Goulbourne adds:

The image that the *Reveries* give of Rousseau as the wandering observant, solitary man seems to foreshadow the famous *flâneur* of the nineteenth century, but with the crucial difference that the *flâneur* could only exist in the city, detached from the crowds but endlessly intrigued by them, whereas Rousseau wanted nothing to do with them or the urban experience as a whole.<sup>241</sup>

Author Rebecca Solnit agrees that it was ‘...Rousseau who laid the groundwork for the ideological edifice within which walking itself would be enshrined.’<sup>242</sup> And Merlin Coverley adds that Rousseau, ‘...consecrated the hallowed role of the philosopher-walker in the iconography of Enlightenment thinking...’<sup>243</sup>

In the winter of 1882-1883 Friedrich Nietzsche walked an extraordinary idea into existence as he explored the Bay of Rapallo, on the Italian Riviera in regular morning and afternoon walks. Nietzsche claimed the idea of Zarathustra simply ‘overtook’ him saying, ‘...on these two walks...the whole of *Zarathustra 1* occurred to me...’ For Nietzsche, Zarathustra became a vehicle for expressing his version of the doctrine of eternal recurrence.<sup>244</sup> And the spotlight would fall on an eccentric, velvet-suited walker, who eschewed randomness and the natural landscape for repeating and repeated patterns set in an urban context. Composer Erik Satie would be one of the first composers to break with nineteenth century Romanticism to make new, spare, and often wonderfully absurd compositions. Mason Currey in his book *Daily Rituals: How artists work*, (2013) says, ‘The scholar Roger Shattuck once proposed that Satie’s unique musical beat, and his appreciation of the “possibility of variations within repetition,” could be traced to his “endless walking back and forth across the same landscape day after day.”’<sup>245</sup> Currey goes on to say, ‘Indeed, Satie was observed stopping to jot down ideas during his walks, pausing under the streetlamps if it was dark.’<sup>246</sup> Satie walked the suburbs on his daily path between Paris and Arcueil as the dandy or *flâneur* on hard surfaces rather than the solitary walker in nature.

By the twentieth century walking was facilitating aesthetic outcomes. The writers and thinkers who for centuries had walked their ideas into existence, were now joined by artists who walked. As Merlin Coverley claims:

<sup>240</sup> Rousseau, JJ, Goulbourne, R (translation & introduction) 2011, *Reveries of the solitary walker* (1782), Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. xvii.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., p. xvii.

<sup>242</sup> Solnit, R 2001, *Wanderlust: a history of walking*, Penguin Books, New York, p. 17.

<sup>243</sup> Coverley, M 2012, *The art of wandering: the writer as walker*, Oldcastle Books, Harpenden, p. 24.

<sup>244</sup> Nietzsche, F, Kaufmann, W (translator), 1969 *Ecce Homo* (1908), Vintage, New York, pp. 279-298.

<sup>245</sup> Currey, M 2013, *Daily rituals: how artists work*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, p. 94.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., p. 94.



...as an aesthetic act walking has played a crucial role in many of the twentieth century's most notable avant-garde movements, from Dada and Surrealism to Situationism and beyond: more recently it has become associated with the Land Art movement and the practices of performance art.<sup>247</sup>

There was one aspect of *Walking the Dog (and other things)* to which I did not give due consideration. And that was the dwellers resident in the house, namely my husband and myself. We would also become performers. Our comings and goings, our walking to and from the property, the in and out of the car, were also captured on camera. While that may sound naïve my obsessive focus was on the walkers, dogs, joggers and bike riders on the footpath and in the street. Even the postman in his citrus yellow garb is a flamboyant performer. I had always intended to eliminate as many cars as possible from the final cut (provided that did not mean sacrificing a walker) to focus on the human aspect of the street activity and once I realized the existence of this other world of activity my first reaction was to consign the footage to the 'bin' with the cars. I reconsidered. Discussion with colleagues supported the idea of two moving image works positioned side by side, one a heightened representation of the ordinary with an absurdist quality (my life in fragments) and the other the world of walked fragments. A second work, *Coming and Going* was born. By making this change the witness became the participant thereby changing the outcome and reinforcing the statement made previously that nothing observed or witnessed remains unaltered – the slippage between the role of witness and participant providing yet another layer of complexity to the act of looking and being looked at. James Elkins says to '...see is to be seen, and everything I see is like an eye, collecting my gaze, blinking and staring, focusing and reflecting, sending my look back to me.'<sup>248</sup>

<sup>247</sup> Coverley, M 2012, *The art of wandering: the writer as walker*, Oldcastle Books, Harpenden, p. 12.

<sup>248</sup> Elkins, J 1998, *The object stares back*, Harvest edition published by arrangement with Simon & Schuster, New York, p. 51.



PLATE 24 IMAGES 60-63

Greer Honeywill, *Coming and Going*, work in progress, July 2013

Christian Boltanski said that he forgot the cameras in his studio. This is not my experience. From the moment I realized that only cars would be edited from the data, or overly long intervals between walkers, my awareness did not diminish. Now the camera is gone I walk to the letterbox or to the car and realize I am no longer crossing the eye of the camera. How is it possible that I feel a strange sense of loss? The original objective in making the works *Walking the Dog (and other things)* and *Coming and Going* was to create non-narrative, documentaries of the street composed of gathered glimpses from a fixed position, consistent with the front fence line of my property. An observance of the patterns created by the people who use the street as a stage on a regular basis. In effect each new performer is an interruption. Each new character creates a jump, a break in an otherwise smooth and anticipated frame. Roger Shattuck, talking about Proust and cinema believes:

Montage vividly conveys the sensation of intermittency or jump that remains in any grasp we have of life and the tendency of what we feel to resist any prolonged order or linear sequence of time. The complex art form we call 'the movies' employs both cinematographic and montage principles. The former without the latter would lead to monotony: the latter without the former would lead to incoherence.<sup>249</sup>

As the edit stage began I slowly came to realize that a month of data was immense. Just the edited data from one week would likely run for more than three hours – more than the most stalwart spectator could endure. I made the decision that the two works would be developed

<sup>249</sup> Shattuck, R 1983, *Proust's binoculars: a study of memory, time and recognition in 'a la recherche du temps perdu,'* Princeton University Press, New Jersey, pp. 50-51.

from the data collected in the first week only.

Just as a multiplicity of fragments combine to form *The Life of C.B.* so a multiplicity of fragments combined within these two moving image works, now made from one week of gathered data. Like the Boltanski work these pieces remain true to the documentary intention. *Walking the Dog (and other things)* and *Coming and Going* are not only metaphorical mirrors their side-by-side positioning creates yet another 'mirror', allowing chance counterpoint to play out as the works loop continuously. *Walking the Dog (and other things)* runs for more than three hours (3:44:07), while *Coming and Going* runs for just over one hour (1:07:51), and remains intentionally reversed to create a particular framing for the work. In the latter work intervals between events have in most cases been shortened because there are fewer events. *Coming and Going* works, in the main, at 'right angles' to *Walking the Dog (and other things)* and despite the compression of activity events play out slowly. Editing cannot change the natural rhythm of the action. *Coming and Going* repeats more than three times against *Walking the Dog (and other things)* and as it does chance synchronicities occur and the occasional discord. In an atmospheric sense the days in the two works are not synchronized and therefore different natural lighting effects play out on one side in contrast to the other.



PLATE 25 IMAGES 64-65

Possible framing options for *Walking the Dog (and other things)* and *Coming and Going*, work in progress, December 2013



The work is long because it is the full account of the street activity in the period chosen, 23-29 January 2013. However the length of the work cannot compare with Boltanski's archive to date, approximately 105,120 hours or 6,307,200 minutes. What entices the viewer to watch is chance – the chance entry point to a work and both the counterpoint and the intersection of changing fragments that appear on the screens at the moment of random entry and immediately after.



PLATE 26 IMAGES 66-67

Greer Honeywill, *Coming and Going*, 2013-2015 (left side of screen)

Greer Honeywill, *Walking the Dog (and other things)*, 2013-2015 (right side of screen)

Single channel videos, duration infinite, split screen version

# 03

## 04 The Constantly Moving Eye

now the...street is more a jungle than the theatre. One goes where one must. A site fraught with risks, not chances; not meant for the gentlemen of leisure, and certainly not for the faint-hearted among them. The street is the 'out there' from which one hides, at home or inside the car, behind security locks and burglar alarms.

– ZYGMUNT BAUMAN<sup>250</sup>

Bauman introduces a change of focus from a quiet street in a quiet suburb of a small city to the more fraught and populated streets of suburban Sydney. New Zealand born, Sydney-based, Rebecca Shanahan (1963- ), a lecturer in photography at the National Art School, Sydney, with a studio practice embracing both still and moving image works was also watching the streets. In 2012 she made a work called *Neighbours*, referencing the language of surveillance and image capture in public space.<sup>251</sup> The gathering of material for *Neighbours* echoed the fragmentary, non-narrative approach of *Walking the Dog (and other things)* and *Coming and Going* except for one important difference. In this case instead of a fixed position CCTV camera such as the one I used, or the three fixed position CCTV cameras utilised by Boltanski for his work *The Life of C.B.*, Shanahan used a digital camera (Canon 5D DSLR Mk 3) that she then bolted to the handlebars of her bike thereby creating a fixed camera on wheels. The artist then turned the lens of the camera to face the facades of houses in her neighbourhood streets. In this manner the bike became the equivalent of a dolly, a device to keep the camera steady and always at the same level. While the camera was on the move it gathered fragmentary glimpses of each house and the occupants as Shanahan walked or rode slowly around her local streets never venturing, or needing to venture, further than a kilometre from her own house.

The relationship between walking, glancing and the generation of ideas is well established. Even Boltanski in conversation with Grenier, noted with enthusiasm, '...this idea...came to

<sup>250</sup> Bauman, Z 1994, 'Desert spectacular', in Tester, K (ed.), *The flâneur*, Routledge, London, p. 148.

<sup>251</sup> Shanahan, R 2012, website, viewed 15 July 2013, <<http://www.rebeccashanahan.net>>.

me in a flash, while I was going for a walk.<sup>252</sup> The work Boltanski was referring to was (*Prendre la Parole*) *Speaking Up*, 2005, mentioned earlier in the text. And this is the way Shanahan developed her idea for *Neighbours*. The idea came to her as she was walking home from the station on a warm Sydney evening. On such evenings front doors and windows of the typical Sydney terrace houses are thrown open to any breeze and internal lights illuminate the interiors. In his *Arcades Project* (1927-1940) Benjamin wrote:

Why does the glance into an unknown window always find a family at a meal, or else a solitary man, seated at a table under a hanging lamp, occupied with some obscure niggling thing? Such a glance is the germ cell of Kafka's work.<sup>253</sup>

I talked to Rebecca Shanahan about the making of *Neighbours* and excerpts from that interview on 16 October 2013 are included in this chapter.<sup>254</sup>

I was walking home one night from the railways station on a warm Sydney evening and there were a lot of doorways open and I looked into them, as I always do, and realized that [what I could see] was a continuation of what I had been doing [with still photographs] but this time it was other peoples' interior spaces and I was in a public place looking into the domestic space whereas previously in my work I'd been inside my own home looking out. I live in a neighbourhood of students and academics, a young neighbourhood and they were completely unselfconscious about leaving the front door open, the curtains or blinds open and the lights on inside and they were completely uninhibited about not modifying their living room behaviour.<sup>255</sup>

John Berger talks about the duality of the watcher and the watched. In his book, *Ways of Seeing*, (1972) he says:

Soon after we can see, we are aware that we can also be seen. The eye of the other combines with our own eye to make it fully credible that we are part of the visible world. If we accept that we can see that hill over there, we propose that from that hill we can be seen. The reciprocal nature of vision is more fundamental than that of spoken dialogue.<sup>256</sup>

It is this reciprocal vision that is at play in Shanahan's neighbourhood and soon after she developed the idea for *Neighbours*, Sydney suffered an extreme heat wave.

The heat wave lasted for a week, which was great because it meant that I could go out every night for a week and collect footage. Every night as soon as it got dark until about 2.00 o'clock in the morning I was out riding around my neighbourhood collecting footage. [As I worked] I was embedding this sense of neighbourliness. This is my neighbourhood this is my banal routine, these are streets I go down all the time, these are people that I see all

<sup>252</sup> Boltanski, C, in Grenier, C, Sante, L (foreword) 2009, *The possible life of Christian Boltanski*, MFA Publications, Boston, p. 189.

<sup>253</sup> Benjamin, W, Eiland, H & McLaughlin, K (eds) 2002, *The arcades project* (1927-1940), Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 218.

<sup>254</sup> A transcript of the interview is included in the appendix.

<sup>255</sup> Shanahan, R 2013, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 16 October.

<sup>256</sup> Berger, J 1972, *Ways of seeing*, Penguin Books and the BBC, London, p. 9.



the time. I'm not like an outsider looking in at a group of strangers and observing them in a kind of ethnographic way... over that week every evening that's what I did I strapped up my bike and I went out. So the repetition was part of the work. Like you [referring to my uncertainty once I realized I was also a part of the digital capture], I hadn't intended to include the footage of my shadow but that ended up being quite significant for me and that's something I hadn't even known I was collecting... There was also an unexpected sound track. There was something quite meditative about hearing all the clicks of me changing gear and the bumps as I went on and off the footpath and it just became a kind of rhythm of the repeated journeys. I hadn't thought about sound when I was making the work. So that's just the diegetic sound completely unedited.<sup>257</sup>

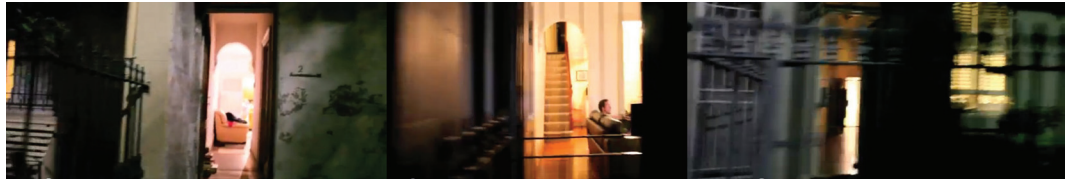


PLATE 27 IMAGE 68

Rebecca Shanahan, *Neighbours*, 2012, detail, (screenshots)

In the openness witnessed in her neighbourhood, Shanahan believed there was an acceptance, even a degree of comfort in being watched, surveilled or self-surveilled. I asked if she had spoken to any neighbours as she filmed.

No. If it was logical to have eye contact I had eye contact... As far as I was concerned I was a neighbour walking down the street or riding down the street I just happened to have a camera bolted to my bike. From the moment I stepped onto the street [with my camera], I encountered that thing that everybody with a camera encounters on the street you have to negotiate the politics and the cultural implications of being a street photographer. And I also felt since 9/11 photography in public places has become a fairly contested activity and the general population has become highly sensitised to the presence of a person with a camera in a public place despite the fact that they will accept surveillance cameras and despite the fact that they are entirely comfortable with being surveilled by institutions. I felt ethically and legally what I was doing was OK because I teach and I have to be able to inform students of what is legal and not when they are photographing or filming in public places. But it seemed to me there was a greater public acceptance of institutional surveillance cameras in public places than still photographers. I believe very strongly in the right of photographers to inhabit the streets and image their culture and image their experience.<sup>258</sup>

In early 2012 Sydney University hosted an international conference called *Surveillance and/in Everyday Life*. Shanahan attended and presented a paper on *Neighbours*.

It was very interesting having my work critiqued by security experts but for me there were two things that I took away from this conference. There were lawyers in my audience saying, 'you're not allowed to do that. That's against the law.' So there were lawyers in the audience who didn't know the law. The other thing that I gathered from

<sup>257</sup> Shanahan, R 2013, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 16 October.

<sup>258</sup> Shanahan, R 2013, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 16 October.

that conference was the understanding from the various papers presented that there had been a really profound shift in people's perceptions of surveillance, away from mistrust and towards acceptance and over and over again I heard people from various sectors of industry saying that people no longer cared about being surveilled accepting it as beneficial to the public good... There are people in England with surveillance cameras bolted to their front windows... pointing out their front windows, and they have agreed to that because they believe it makes the street safer. So the institutions have taken the imaging equipment inside private homes and they're basically surveilling the street from inside these homes and people have agreed to that. I did feel very strongly that what I was witnessing [as I made *Neighbours*] was a shift in the sense of privacy by a generation that had grown up on social media and nothing... nothing I image of them could come close to being as... over-disclosing as anything they could post for themselves because for me social media is all about self surveillance. This comes up over and over again when I find myself talking to artists and to students who are in their 20s and 30s. They are living with photography in a way that I never did at that age and they are self-surveilling in a way that I never imagined. This just meant that I had this whole neighbourhood of people for whom their private domestic space was accessible to the public eye. *Neighbours* also became a documentary about a neighbourhood that's changing quite quickly. There's a real documentary component to it and like you not knowing what you were going to get from your footage I didn't consider the documentary dimension of this project until I began to edit it and then I realized I had a documentary about a certain place and a certain time that means in thirty years people will say – that's what rubbish bins looked like back then and that's how people behaved in a heat wave...<sup>259</sup>



PLATE 28 IMAGE 69

Rebecca Shanahan, *Neighbours*, 2012

Dye sublimation print on polyester fabric 285 x 600cm

Single channel digital video, 8:59 minutes duration

Installation at Eastern Bloc Gallery, Rozelle, NSW, AUS

In making the work *Neighbours* Shanahan aimed to explore 'the interzone between public and private, intimacy and distance, voyeurism and documentation'<sup>260</sup> intersections where the

<sup>259</sup> Shanahan, R 2013, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 16 October.

<sup>260</sup> Shanahan, R 2013, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 16 October.

perception of discontinuity fuels a sense of anxiety in the spectator. The decision was made to exhibit the work on a domestic scale within an artist run space (once a corner shop) close to her neighbourhood. The installation consisted of a coffee table supporting a domestic scale television, screening the moving eye footage, set against a very large printed curtain. The contradiction of the large curtain and the small screen was, she said, a deliberate subversion of the usual big cinematic paradigm. The image on the curtain is of the same neighbourhood streets from an elevated position simulating a surveillance camera. The elevation of the camera for this shot creating some perplexing and unsettling angles. The work brings to mind John Berger's statement that the '...relationship between what we see and what we know is never settled.'<sup>261</sup>



PLATE 29 IMAGE 70

Rebecca Shanahan, elevated photograph for curtain element of *Neighbours*

As I have stated, within this research project I have aimed to use, wherever possible, primary sources for artworks. Works that I have actually seen and experienced. In this mind-set I was grateful for the opportunity to view the *Neighbours* curtain. What cannot be seen clearly in smaller images on Shanahan's website are the many scattered fragments of houses, vehicles, trees and road markings that sprawl across the curtain.<sup>262</sup> These elements are significant. Lit by unknown ambient sources they curve across the drape of the curtain appearing both liquid and unstable. The surveillance-like angle of the photograph creating an unsettling, ambiguous, image promoting simultaneous feelings of comfort and disquiet.

Returning to the subject of the conference *Surveillance and/in Everyday Life* and Shanahan's perception that the conferees and presenters were reflecting a change away from rejection of surveillance to acceptance. 'They perceived surveillance as a means of reducing crime and

<sup>261</sup> Berger, J 1972, *Ways of seeing*, Penguin Books and the BBC, London, p. 7.

<sup>262</sup> Rebecca Shanahan was a finalist in *The Substation Contemporary Art Prize*, 2013, Melbourne. The curtain element from the *Neighbours* installation was her entry. Artists are permitted to enter one element only.

making themselves feel safer...,'<sup>263</sup> she remarked. 'Like the chain of events in the Jill Meagher case where the perpetrator was caught on a CCTV camera installed in a dress shop?' I asked.<sup>264</sup>

Exactly! And that whole story totally haunted me because it was going on around this time [the making of *Neighbours*] as well. I've actually got screen snaps of that surveillance, of those images. I'm shivering now when I think about it, so that sort of suggested to me...that there had been a really profound shift in the way that people perceived public and private.<sup>265</sup>

Bauman in *Liquid Surveillance* (2013) says we '...have become dependent on surveillance being done and being seen to be done.' He quotes Anna Minton on this subject. Minton says, 'the need for security can become addictive, with people finding that however much they have it can never be enough and that rather like an addictive drug, once they have got used to it they can't do without it.'<sup>266</sup> Which brings to mind a contentious local issue that is a concern across Australia, the safety of cyclists on the roads. On Saturday 22 March 2014, the Hobart newspaper, *The Mercury*, ran a story under the headline, *Commute-cam: a new rage on the roads*. The story outlined the fact that cyclists are now, like Rebecca Shanahan, strapping cameras to the handlebars of their bikes and also to the rear. Risk management is the aim, the footage furnishing cyclists with evidence should they be involved in an accident, especially with a car. Tasmanian Police Senior Sergeant, Luke Manhood was quoted as saying, '...as a general rule, using recording devices in public places is legal, and recording a daily commute from a dashboard, handlebars or helmet posed very few privacy issues.'<sup>267</sup> While this seems perfectly sensible the proliferation of cameras, as Minton says, continues.

Roger Shattuck talking about film in 1984 said:

The sense of the fragment has bestowed a new openness of form on the arts which combines a refusal of traditional orders, deliberate ambivalence of meaning, acceptance of obscurity, comic playfulness, and deep self irony. Thus the fragment, which would first appear to be a mode of anti-structure, itself shapes the way we perceive the world and recast it into works of art.<sup>268</sup>

Shattuck's filmic fragment has never been more ever present and that is due in part to the proliferation of CCTV cameras and the smartphone camera. There is much common ground

<sup>263</sup> Shanahan, R 2013, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 16 October.

<sup>264</sup> In 2012, Jill Meagher, a 29 year old Irish woman living in Melbourne and working at the ABC, was raped and murdered on her way home from the *Green Bar* in Brunswick not far from her home. A CCTV camera in a dress shop on Sydney Road, Brunswick captured footage of both the perpetrator and Jill Maeagher. This footage assisted Police in the arrest and conviction of the guilty party. There was public and media outrage that a woman could not walk home safely in the suburb of Brunswick.

<sup>265</sup> Shanahan, R 2013, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 16 October.

<sup>266</sup> Bauman, Z & Lyon, D 2013, *Liquid surveillance: a conversation*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 105.

<sup>267</sup> Smith, L 2014, 'Commute-cam: a new rage on the roads', *The Mercury*, 22 March, pp. 30-31.

<sup>268</sup> Shattuck, R 1984, *The innocent eye: on modern literature & the arts*, Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, p. 39.

shared by the four works discussed in this section. Each work is composed of a continuous gathering of fragments of the lived experience. Boltanski's fragments building a vast living portrait, while my archive of chance fragments, the performance of thirty-six steps from a much larger walk, and Rebecca Shanahan's fragments of house facades and neighbours in a heatwave mirror place. And always there is the residue of the watcher. We cannot stop glancing. The eye slithers across the surface of people in the street, objects or landscape like the constantly moving, ever present, shadow in Shanahan's *Neighbours*. And the makers are also embedded in each the works. Boltanski as the subject/object of a living portrait, itself a performance work, while Shanahan and myself became unwitting performers within our works. She as a moving shadow fixed within the layers of fragments and me as an inhabitant of the street captured within my own work. Changing the work. Each work is a mirror or sorts, a mirror of existence, a mirror of this, '...absurdly repetitive universe we call life, as Roger Shattuck would say.'<sup>269</sup> And each work is about life and inevitably, death. Each, as Susan Sontag would say, is a *memento mori*.<sup>270</sup> Nothing is fixed and nothing will remain the same. What has been captured may have a life as art but as it *lives* reality changes.

The works discussed focus on the capture and recording of ordinary life lived and the reframing of this capture (or gathering) within a gallery context – or in Boltanski's case an alternative to the white box gallery format. In her book *Thinking, Living, Looking*, (2012), Siri Hustvedt discusses Susan Sontag and Jean Baudrillard suggesting that they:

...would agree that human beings gain access to the outside world through our perceptions of it, which is a necessarily limited view of things. And yet, a distinction remains between a life being lived and the mechanical images of life being lived. Through a complicated evolution of poststructuralist thinking, it became fashionable in some circles to think that people have been entirely remade or 'constructed' by our new techno world, that even our human *needs* have been altered. In an era of reality TV, celebrity culture, and ever-growing digital technologies, has modern life, as Baudrillard would have it, dissolved entirely into simulacra?<sup>271</sup>

Each of the works discussed encompasses the act of walking in varying contexts – as elemental as Boltanski's constant movements to and fro in his studio as he works or the dedicated suburban walkers (with or without dogs) or the suburban dweller constantly moving in and out of her property or the artist who walks (and rides) to make art. Just as wonder can accelerate and stimulate the act of intellectual enquiry, walking can also act as a catalyst, enabling the mind to take great leaps as it did for both Rebecca Shanahan and myself. In his introduction to Jorge Luis Borges' book *Labyrinths*, (1970) James E. Irby writes of the magical places the stimulated mind can occupy:

<sup>269</sup> Shattuck, R 1983, *Proust's binoculars: a study of memory, time and recognition in 'a la recherche du temps perdu,'* Princeton University Press, New Jersey, p. 25.

<sup>270</sup> Sontag, S 1977, *On photography*, Picador, New York, p. 15.

<sup>271</sup> Hustvedt, S 2012, *Living, thinking, looking*, Sceptre, London, p. 261.

We are transported into a realm where fact and fiction, the real and the unreal, the whole and the part, the highest and the lowest, are complimentary aspects of the same continuous being; a realm where ‘any man [or woman] is all men [or women], where ‘all men [or women] who repeat a line of Shakespeare *are* Shakespeare’. The world is a book and the book is a world, and both are labyrinthine and enclose enigmas designed to be understood and participated in by man [woman].<sup>272</sup>

Irby is talking about the writings of Borges and his engagement with wonder, walking, and the lived experience. The history of wonder and walking share a deep philosophical connection that through the ages has found expression in the work of artists, composers, writers and thinkers and this continues ever more strongly today. In the moment, as the mind is set free, and the eye naturally ranges, anything is possible.

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<sup>272</sup> Borges, JL, Yates, DA & Irby, JE (eds), Gibson, W (introduction) 2007, *Labyrinths: selected stories and other writings* (1964), New Directions, New York, p. xvii.



# Extending the Moment

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04

# 04

## 01 The Artist Walks the Camera Into Position

You may follow the route of a walk made by another, but you cannot repeat the walk he has made, for that is an historical and unrepeatable occurrence. Nothing can ever be the same.

– MEL GOODING<sup>273</sup>

The act of walking and its historic importance to artists, writers and thinkers was introduced in section 3, chapter 3, and in this chapter I extend that focus. Mel Gooding says of walking and the Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, that in ‘...Rousseau’s recreational botanising on his island park, in his walking and reveries, in his benevolent interference with ecology, and then in his report on those experiences, we have an exemplar for the modern artist of nature...’<sup>274</sup> While Gooding talks of the thinker in nature and the inevitable connection to the Land artists, Bauman looks to the city where Walter Benjamin transformed the *flâneur* into the central symbolic figure of the modern city.<sup>275</sup> French art critic and writer, Hubert Besacier, says that, ‘of course anyone can go for a walk, but it can also be a starting point for all the domains of creative activity: poetry, literature, art, music...the walk has inspired diverse creative works.’<sup>276</sup> It is walking as a starting point that is explored in this chapter – artists who walk to create works – often ephemeral works necessitating a document (most likely a photograph or more recently a moving image record), an exhibitable trace, as proof of existence. Critic and curator Lawrence Alloway said:

Documentation distributes and makes consultable the work of art that is inaccessible, in a desert say, or ephemeral, made of flowers. The photographic record is evidential, but it is not a reproduction...<sup>277</sup>

In the last half-century perhaps the best-known artists who walked to make art were the Land

<sup>273</sup> Gooding, M, Furlong, W (interviews) 2002, *Song of the earth*, Thames and Hudson, London, p. 17.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>275</sup> Bauman, Z 1995, *Life in fragments: essays in postmodern morality*, Blackwell, Oxford, p. 92.

<sup>276</sup> Besacier, H, Pickford, S, (translation) 2002, *Nils-Udo: art in nature*, Flammarion, Paris, p. 126.

<sup>277</sup> Alloway, L 1970, ‘Artists and photographs’, *Studio International*, vol. 179, no. 921, pp. 162-164.

artists. Land Art emerged in America in 1968 but was by no means confined to America. The movement gained early recognition through two exhibitions. In 1968 an exhibition titled *Earthworks* at the Candace Dwan Gallery, New York, and in 1969 an exhibition titled *Earth Art* at Cornell University's Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art. Artists walked into the landscape to create works while the gallery exhibitions related to these works consisted almost entirely of documentation – video and sound recordings, photographs and sketches. In many cases the gestures made within the landscape were ephemeral, part of the repertoire of the everyday, however when performed within the landscape the gestures were transformed – re-contextualised. They were no longer ordinary. In 2012 the Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA), Los Angeles, staged *Ends of the Earth: Land Art to 1974*, thought to be the most comprehensive exhibition of Land Art ever undertaken. The curatorial team, art historian Miwon Kwon and curator Philipp Kaiser used the distance created by the passage of time to contextualise little discussed, but none-the-less critical issues related to the movement. New York based artist, curator and writer, Chris Wiley in his review of the exhibition for *Frieze* echoed these fresh insights saying:

...that it [Land Art] was not only produced in the vast, sublime environs of nature, but had equal purchase on the territory of the less picturesque, urban landscapes and, most interestingly, that it was a wide-ranging, international impulse, and functioned equally as a media practice as it did as a sculptural, performative and conceptual one.<sup>278</sup>

Wiley says Kwon and Kaiser made the assertion that the vast majority of Land Art works were 'produced' not simply on-site but within the public consciousness, through the dissemination of documentary photographs in popular media outlets like *Life*, *Newsweek* and *Time*, a fact that led the curatorial team to wonder if the media was a fundamental aspect of Land Art's very existence.<sup>279</sup> One can only imagine how useful contemporary technology (such as the iPhone) and our current means of disseminating images and information would have been to the Land artists in 1968.

While Kaiser and Kwon have expanded accepted views on the ways in which Land artists engaged with their audience the photograph remains an important document. Alloway maintained that in the period of the late 1960s there was, '...an anti-expertise, anti-glamorous quality about the photographs...' made by artists. These images were factual, evidentiary documents, devoid of romanticism.<sup>280</sup> He cites Robert Smithson (1938-1973) saying that while Smithson preferred his works to be experienced within the natural landscape the artist acknowledged the inherent impracticality in terms of a larger audience accessing remote works and this prompted the artist, albeit reluctantly, to turn to the camera. 'The documentary photograph,' says Alloway,

<sup>278</sup> Wiley, C 2013, 'Ends of the earth: land art to 1974 at MoCA, Los Angeles', *Frieze*, issue 152, n.p.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid., n.p.

<sup>280</sup> Alloway, L 1970, 'Artists and photographs', *Studio International*, vol. 179, no. 921, pp. 162-164.

‘is grounds for believing that something happened.’<sup>281</sup> Later in the seventies, Susan Sontag said in *On Photography* (1977) that:

...photographs have become so much the leading visual experience that we now have works of art which are produced in order to be photographed. In much of conceptual art, in Christo’s packaging of the landscape, in the earthworks of Walter De Maria and Robert Smithson, the artist’s work is known principally by the photographic report of it in galleries and museums; sometimes the size is such that it can *only* be known in a photograph (or from an airplane). The photograph is not, even ostensibly, meant to lead us back to an original experience.<sup>282</sup>

While Roger Scruton has said, the photograph, no matter the purpose, ‘...is incapable of representing anything unreal: if a photograph is a photograph of a man, then there is some particular man of whom it is a photograph.’<sup>283</sup>

Since the invention of the lightweight camera applicable to the masses, this *eye* could be walked into position not only by artists and photographers, it could be walked into position by everyman(woman). Walked into place in endless peregrinations, whether on hard surfaces in the suburbs and cities like the Belgian-born artist Francis Alÿs (1959- ) or the natural landscape like the British artist Richard Long (1945- ). Artists were also experimenting with photographs as objects. For instance Ed Ruscha’s (1937- ) photo-based, self published, artist books, like *Babycakes*, 1962, and *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*, 1963, and Bruce Nauman’s artist books, *Clea Rsky* (Clear Sky), 1968-69, and *LAAir*, 1970. Critic and writer Lucy Lippard saw such works as a dematerialising of the art object.<sup>284</sup> In the mid nineteenth century when the American company Eastman Kodak developed the first portable camera the existing paradigm changed in terms of the document and the attempt to capture the moment. The *eye* was now in the hands of the masses rather than the specialist studio photographers. By 1900 when the Kodak Box Brownie became freely available, the threshold had been reached (or so we thought) in terms of the easy ability to capture and document everything. Sontag writes of this time: ‘In the fairy tale of photography the magic box insures veracity and banishes error, compensates for inexperience and rewards innocence.’<sup>285</sup>

If I dive into the very depths of my studio storage I will find my original camera, a Kodak Box Brownie, a gift for a birthday in the late fifties when I was a teenager. By then the Box

<sup>281</sup> Alloway, L 1970, ‘Artists and photographs’, *Studio International*, vol. 179, no. 921, pp. 162-164.

<sup>282</sup> Sontag, S 1977, *On photography*, Picador, New York, pp. 147-148.

<sup>283</sup> Scruton, R 1981, ‘Photography and representation’, *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 7, no. 3, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p. 579.

<sup>284</sup> Lippard, L 1997, *Six years: the dematerialization of the art object from 1966-1972* (1973), University of California, Oakland, p. vii.

‘Conceptual art, for me, means work in which the idea is paramount and the material form is secondary, lightweight, ephemeral, cheap, unpretentious and/or ‘dematerialized’,’ Lucy Lippard.

<sup>285</sup> Sontag, S 1977, *On photography*, Picador, New York, p. 53.

Brownie had developed from the literal cardboard box to a lightweight easy to carry, Bakelite camera. With the Brownie the snapshot was born and the *eye* became mobile. As Phillips wrote in her catalogue essay, 'Looking Out, Looking In: Voyeurism and Its Affinities From the Beginning of Photography', it was Kodak who '...supplied everyman(woman) with a camera, and in popular literature there soon appeared a new pest, the amateur photographer, an often invasive, sneaky character...The issue of privacy evolved as a pressing and common concern.'<sup>286</sup> Looking backward from the seventies Sontag mused that the, '...age when taking photographs required a cumbersome and expensive contraption – the toy of the clever, the wealthy, the obsessed – seems remote indeed from the era of the sleek pocket cameras that invite anyone to take pictures.'<sup>287</sup> And Sontag's comment was made well before the iPhone (or any form of smartphone) became the tool of everyman(woman) as it is today. Phillips says:

As cameras became small and capable of recording events that were quick and unnoticed, or far away, or considered private, the resulting pictures encouraged viewers to tolerate or seek out or breach or at least question what we, as a culture, did not seek out before this invention...<sup>288</sup>

While the humble Box Brownie was not necessarily used by artists to document their work I do know that its cousin the Kodak Instamatic camera was the choice of artist Dan Graham (1942- ) who began photographing the, houses and suburban diners in his native New Jersey in the 1960s. Graham said he was, '...drawn to amateur photography [because] it was cheap and it called for no special skill.'<sup>289</sup> When new technology can be accessed readily by the masses everything changes and artists are often the first to experiment with the new.

In his book, *Song of the Earth* (2002), Mel Gooding discusses the relationship between artists, landscape and walking over a forty-year period from the sixties. Walking has, he says:

...been the primary mode of artistic action for Richard Long and his contemporary, Hamish Fulton...the strategy might be described as an action in the landscape which constitutes the work, whose existence is known to the artist's public by way of a report or a photograph, a marked map, or a text...or by any combination of these forms of information.<sup>290</sup>

A great many books have been published in the past two decades about diverse aspects of walking. Merlin Coverley has written two books on walking, the first titled *Psychogeography* (2006), focuses on the realm of the urban wanderer, the *dérive* (a mode of walking and thinking) and the realm of Guy Debord founder of the Letterist group and Situationist International. In his second book, *The Art of Wandering: the Writer as Walker* (2012) Coverley

<sup>286</sup> Phillips, SS (ed.), Baker, S & Brookman, P et al 2010, *Exposed: voyeurism, surveillance and the camera*, exhibition catalogue, 28 May-3 October 2010, Tate Modern, London, UK, p. 14.

<sup>287</sup> Sontag, S 1977, *On photography*, Picador, New York, p. 7.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>289</sup> Pelzer, B, Francis, M & Colomina, B 2001, *Dan Graham*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, p. 38.

<sup>290</sup> Gooding, M, Furlong, W (interviews) 2002, *Song of the earth*, Thames and Hudson, London, p. 21.

agrees that, ‘...[walking] has become associated with the Land Art movement and the practices of performance art.’<sup>291</sup> He goes on to talk about the act of walking as a critical facilitator for the primary mode of artistic action – the gathering, the gesture, the creation or documentation of the work. In this context walking becomes a necessary part of the process of making art within the landscape, although the great value of walking is not always as an end, it is often a facilitator. Karen O’Rourke, an American born, Paris-based, multimedia artist, and writer of the book, *Walking and Mapping: artists as cartographers* (2013) also looks at groups such as the Psychogeographers, The Situationists (Situationist International 1957-1962) and contemporary artists using technology including GPS tracking devices to map the landscape. Of artist Richard Long she says, ‘...Long was probably the first contemporary artist to see walking as an art form.’<sup>292</sup> Long’s works, in which he leaves behind a perfectly straight line drawn in the landscape are well documented and supported by a protocol, ‘...a rule, guideline, or document that specifies how an activity should be performed.’<sup>293</sup> This is not unlike the protocols developed by Sol LeWitt for each of his wall drawings to enable others to re-create the works. Christian Boltanski also referred to the use of protocols when discussing possible re-creations of his works. Boltanski prefers to liken any protocol to a musical score allowing for interpretation in the re-presentation of his work by others. O’Rourke says of Long ‘...that all of his projects begin with an idea,’<sup>294</sup> and this idea must be walked into existence according to the protocol, and documented as proof of existence.

In the southwest of London in the constructed suburban landscape of Barnes, Scottish-born Bruce McLean (1944- ) created a walking piece called *Taking A Line for A Walk*, 1969, a work documented by his photographer friend Dirk Buwalda (1947-2009). In this work McLean drags behind him, through the streets of Barnes, a length of string. In the spirit of ideas-based art practice the string leaves no trace. The artists and the ideas-based works I have identified (and those yet to be identified) exemplify not only the act of walking but also the act of living – the documentation of the lived experience becoming the gallery exhibit. For me walking liberates the mind – transports the mind to a universe free from the day-to-day where the eye can see as never before and the mind wanders into unexplored territories where the surprising and sudden visceral experience of wonder is possible.

<sup>291</sup> Coverley, M 2012, *The art of wandering: the writer as walker*, Oldcastle Books, Harpenden, p. 12.

<sup>292</sup> O’Rourke, K 2013, *Walking and mapping: artists as cartographers*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, p. 43.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., p. 48.





PLATE 30 IMAGE 71

Bruce McLean, *Taking a Line for a Walk*, 1969  
Photograph Dirk Buwalda

This otherworldly universe opened up to me long ago as a freedom-seeking child. I frequently absented myself from the domestic realm to walk on the embankment of the creek opposite my parent's house. The German writer and academic W. G. (Max) Sebald, in his book *Rings of Saturn* (1998), reminds me of this time when the capacity of the mind to wander knew no boundaries and fact mixed with fiction. As I meandered along the bank and down to the prohibited realm of the river I was the *flâneur* at the intersection of suburbia and the leftover 'wilderness' of the neglected Sturt Creek. Zygmunt Bauman says of the *flâneur*:

In the dramas he imagines as he wanders, he is the sole mover, scriptwriter, director, ...and critic...the role of the *flâneur* is to rehearse the world as a theatre, life as a play.<sup>295</sup>

Bauman describes exactly what was happening in my imagination as I walked. For the child, scenarios were inspired by movies, newspaper stories or the plots of books, gifts from a childless aunt who worked in the most prestigious bookstore in Adelaide.

In the early seventies in Paris artists were building on the lived experience and forming loose manifestos to guide ideas-based works. In talking to Catherine Grenier about his early development as an artist Christian Boltanski recalled gathering, '...dirt from...family walks in Parc de Saint-Cloud...' The young artist would take this dirt back to his studio and mould it into little balls. He said, 'I moulded three thousand little balls of dirt without leaving the apartment!'<sup>296</sup> Later with friends, artist Jean Le Gac and photographer, sculptor and writer Paul-Amand Gette, the three would perform 'Strolls'. 'We did eight or nine of them. We each had to come up with an idea for a place and we'd go there together, amble about, talk, end up in a café, and send cards to people [about the activity of that day].'<sup>297</sup> These strolls began in 1970

<sup>295</sup> Bauman, Z 1994, 'Desert spectacular', in Tester, K (ed.), *The flâneur*, Routledge, London, pp. 145-146.

<sup>296</sup> Grenier, C, Sante, L (foreword) 2009, *The possible life of Christian Boltanski*, MFA Publications, Boston, p. 35.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

and the subject, ‘...very quickly became the walk itself...’<sup>298</sup>

While Boltanski and his friends were experimenting with strolls others were experimenting with psychogeography<sup>299</sup> or the *dérive* (drift) as defined by the Situationists. Written in 1956 and first published in the *Internationale Situationniste* #2 in December 1958, Guy Debord’s (1931-1994) ‘Theory of the *Dérive*,’ describes ‘...a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances,’ involving ‘playful-constructive behaviour and awareness of psychogeographical effects; which [the Situationists believed] completely distinguishes it from classical notions of the journey and the stroll.’<sup>300</sup> Debord decreed that ideally ‘the *dérive* should be conducted in small groups of two or three people [just like Boltanski and his two friends] and noting that the average duration was a single day...’ although ‘...for some the *dérive* could become the work of a lifetime...’<sup>301</sup> as it did for artist Ralph Rumney (1934-2002). Ralph Rumney, one of the founders of the London Psychogeography Association and Situationist International, said: ‘...my whole life became a *dérive*...In Paris we wandered from café to café – we went where our feet and our inclinations carried us...You discover certain places in a city that you start to appreciate, because you are welcomed in a bar or because suddenly you feel better...’<sup>302</sup> Merlin Coverley says:

While Rumney was clearly gripped by the idea of the *dérive*, he was also openly dismissive of the notion that such a concept was one which originated with the Situationists.<sup>303</sup> ‘Of course, it wasn’t a new discovery...it has always existed...At the level of ideas I don’t think we came up with anything which didn’t already exist.’<sup>304</sup>

In the newly emerging approaches to art in the second half of the twentieth century, influenced by the pace of change especially in the urban environment, there seemed a struggle for ownership of ideas that might not have been so very different from each other, merely existing at a different time. This is pertinent since Rumney readily acknowledged that the Surrealist walker and the *flâneur* predated Debord and the Situationists.<sup>305</sup>

In 1998 a Japanese-born, London based artist, began to work with her camera in the darkened streets of the city of London. She surreptitiously drifted, *flâneur*-like, on hard surfaces, often hiding in plain sight, or in her car, searching opportunistically for her subject with a camera and long lens. At first Shizuka Yokomizo (1966- ) tried to capture images of interiors at night,

<sup>298</sup> Semin, D, Garb, T, & Kuspit, D 1997, *Christian Boltanski*, Phaidon Press Limited, New York, pp. 51-53.

<sup>299</sup> Coverley, M 2010, *Psychogeography*, Pocket Essentials, Harpenden, p. 111.

<sup>300</sup> Debord, G, Knabb, K (translation) 1958, ‘Theory of the *dérive*,’ *Internationale Situationniste* #2, Paris, p. 50.

<sup>301</sup> Coverley, M 2012, *The art of wandering: the writer as walker*, Oldcastle Books, Harpenden, p. 195.

<sup>302</sup> Rumney, R, Imrie, M (translation) 2002, *The consul*, Verso, London, pp. 65-66.

<sup>303</sup> Coverley, M 2012, *The art of wandering: the writer as walker*, Oldcastle Books, Harpenden, p. 203.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>305</sup> Guy Debord expelled Ralph Rumney from *Situationist International* in 1958.

hopefully with inhabitants. Frustrated by the emptiness of these secretive pursuits she set about developing a protocol for a work she would call *Stranger*, a work made between 1998 and 2000. Yokomizo's protocol sought to bring the watcher and the watched together in a reciprocal agreement. Instead of being hidden the artist would emerge from the shadows to have eye contact with the subject and they with her, but the artist and the subject would never speak. At the agreed time, the artist would walk her camera into position take the photograph and leave. Her means of communication a simple letter that read:

Dear Stranger, I am an artist working on a photographic project which involves people I do not know...I would like to take a photograph of you standing in your front room from the street in the evening. A camera will be set outside the window on the street. If you do not mind being photographed, please stand in the room and look into the camera through the window for 10 minutes on [date and time]...I will take your picture and then leave...we will remain strangers to each other...If you do not want to get involved, please simply draw your curtains to show your refusal...I really hope to see you in the window.<sup>306</sup>

It was Rebecca Shanahan who first drew my attention to this work when I confessed to a passion for staring into the illuminated windows of houses in South Yarra on my evening walks in the 1990s. The *Stranger* series would become, for the reclusive artist, a most successful body of work, shown in major exhibitions across the globe from London to Venice, San Francisco to Italy. Yokomizo's *Stranger* series was curated into the landmark exhibition *Exposed: Voyeurism, Surveillance and the Camera* at Tate Modern in 2010. Within the action of the protocol (defined as the performance) Yokomizo looks at the subject and the subject looks back and *in the moment* the presence of the subject within the designated window frame provides wordless agreement to be photographed. The subject walks into position inside the house at the designated time opening the curtains or blinds and filling the window aperture with light, allowing the artist to capture the image. While outside Yokomizo walks her camera into position. Both are actors, performers, each with a clear direction. Phillips says these:

...richly unsettling photographs investigate the idea of voyeuristic seeing with the subject's consent. She makes pictures of people looking out of their windows into the night: they have received the photographer's written invitation to appear there at an appointed time, and have had no other contact with her (those who do not accept close their blinds).<sup>307</sup>

If a subject attempted contact the photograph was not taken and the artist left the site. And once the action had been concluded all that remained of the agreement and the moment was the numbered photograph, the documentary proof of existence of a strange reciprocal agreement. There is a kind of perfection in the simple, almost perfunctory manner of gaining

<sup>306</sup> Cecconi, I 2012, 'Shizuka Yokomizo, Dear stranger', *The Harlow*, viewed 15 April 2014, <<http://www.theharlow.net/shizuka-yokomizo-dear-stranger/>>.

<sup>307</sup> Phillips, SS (ed.), Baker, S & Brookman, P et al 2010, *Exposed: voyeurism, surveillance and the camera*, exhibition catalogue, 28 May-3 October 2010, Tate Modern, London, UK, p. 143.

these images, the method at once audacious and coy.



PLATE 31 IMAGES 72-73

Shizuka Yokomizo, *Stranger No. 2*, 1999, Chromogenic print, 127 x 107.95cm

Shizuka Yokomizo, *Stranger No. 1*, 1998, Chromogenic print, 127 x 107.95cm

Both works, collection, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

There is one further eye that interests me. Depending on the work itself there may be a need for a *third eye*, a third party with a *third party eye*, because the artist is frequently the performer constantly on the move walking an idea, no matter how ephemeral, into existence. Francis Alÿs (1959- ), a frequent walker/performer/collaborator within his practice, has often combined walking in the constructed landscape and the act of perpetrating an intervention – frequently with a political purpose. For Alÿs the document is not usually a still image, rather a moving image. The camera walked into position or continually moving is used to capture the movement of the piece – works such as *The Leak*, 1995, Sao Paulo, (and also Paris 2003) and *The Green Line*, 2004, performed in the streets of Jerusalem. For *The Leak* and *The Green Line* the artist used a small leaking can of paint to create an interrupted or dribbled line in a, ‘desire to leave a permanent trace in the fabric of the city and the collective imagination of its inhabitants through the act of walking.’<sup>308</sup> Alÿs says:

Sometimes doing something poetic can be political, and sometimes doing something political can be poetic.<sup>309</sup>

It is the third party with a camera (still or video) walking behind the artist who captures these performative interventions.

<sup>308</sup> Alÿs, F, Godfrey, M (ed.) 2010, *Francis Alÿs: a story of deception*, exhibition catalogue, 15 June-5 September 2010, Tate Modern, Tate Publishing, London, UK, p. 66.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid., p. 143.



Other ephemeral walking works by Alÿs documented by a third party include *Fairy Tales*, 1995, performed in Mexico City, where the artist unravels the woollen jumper he is wearing, row by row as he walks, leaving behind him a continuous coloured strand released from its former occupation. While *Patriotic Tales* (*Cuentos Patrióticos*), 1997, also performed in Mexico City, is a video performance work in which the walking becomes circular with Alÿs conducting sheep into a circle, one at a time, until the circle of walking sheep is complete (nose to tail), and the path of the journey ephemerally inscribed by the many feet. Once Alÿs completed a circuit he then reversed the action – the artist as the follower rather than the leader. This work, not unusually for the artist, is a highly political piece based on a series of student protests in 1968.<sup>310</sup>

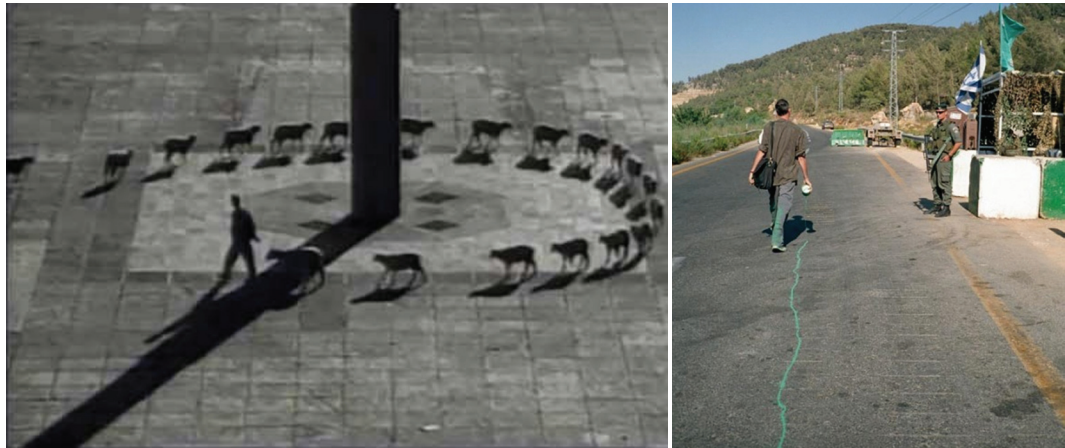


PLATE 32 IMAGES 74-75

Francis Alÿs, *Cuentos Patrióticos*, 1997 (Mexico)

In collaboration with Rafael Ortega

Francis Alÿs, *The Green Line*, 2004 (Jerusalem)

Photographer unknown

Over the last decade Alÿs has collaborated with cinematographer Rafael Ortega and the influential Artangel organisation, a London-based commissioning and production body, to create a series of seven walks.<sup>311</sup> In 2004 the artist made the work *Guards*, utilising the British Army's, Coldstream Guards, to pattern the streets and alleyways of London with regimented walking (marching) using a formula as a directional guide (or protocol) – a work that disappeared in an instant once the Guards stopped marching. To document *Guards* multiple cameras and viewpoints were utilised to gain footage of the work at different stages of performance and in different streets. Elevated angles show the perfection of the regiment in movement and dress as they momentarily overlay the pattern and colour of more permanent street markings. In *Railings*, 2004, the artist walked around Fitzroy Square, London, and as he progressed he ran a

<sup>310</sup> I experienced *Patriotic Tales* (*Cuentos Patrióticos*) at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, (SFMOMA), 16 October 2000.

<sup>311</sup> The Artangel website states the organisation, '...based in London but working across Britain and beyond... commissions and produces exceptional projects by outstanding contemporary artists,' viewed 12 September 2014, <[http://www.artangel.org.uk/about\\_us](http://www.artangel.org.uk/about_us)>.

drumstick along the iron railings of the houses, just as a child might, to *play* the tone of the city. The aleatoric sound inspired by musicians like John Cage. These works, and others described, have in common the fact that they leave no trace – even the leaked paint line will disappear (no matter the intention of the artist), worn away by traffic and pedestrians. Once the works are performed they no longer exist, except in the memory of the artist, spectator and support crew, therefore the need for documentation as a photograph (or video) is essential to provide proof of existence and a life for the work.



PLATE 33 IMAGES 76-78

Francis Alÿs, *Guards*, 2004 (two views)

Francis Alÿs, *Railings*, 2004

Both works in collaboration with Rafael Ortega and Artangel

Klaus Biesenbach and Cara Starke quote Alÿs on the subject of walking as part of his practice:

There is no theory of walking, just a consciousness. But there can be a certain wisdom involved in the act of walking. It's more an attitude, and it is one that fits me all right. It's a state where you can be both alert to all that happens in your peripheral vision and hearing, and yet totally lost in your thought process.<sup>312</sup>

On Friday, 8 February 2013 I visited the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), Melbourne, and the exhibition *Desire Lines*, curated by Juliana Engberg. The exhibition aimed to explore the physical, psychological and poetic dimensions related to art and the act of walking, thinking and discovery. In his overview of the exhibition, journalist Andrew Stephens talks to Engberg, herself a committed walker:

An interesting theme is the treatment of the landscape. Engberg reflects that its use as a basis for artwork has changed dramatically in the past century, from merely pictorial engagement to a 'meandering, a poetry, a line, a navigation. Those things are beautiful,' she says. 'It helps you realize that it is made up of many parts and that the journey is also a mental one... There is something really nice about meandering, about the qualities of the reverie of walking...I

<sup>312</sup> Biesenbach, K & Starke, S 2010, 'Francis Alÿs: a to z', in Alÿs, F, Godfrey, M (ed.) *Francis Alÿs: a story of deception*, exhibition catalogue, 15 June-5 September 2010, Tate Modern, Tate Publishing, London, UK, p. 41.



like to leave myself open to the ambience of meandering. I like to think it develops the qualities of thinking.<sup>313</sup>

Engberg's exhibition highlighted the relationship between art and the act of walking from the second half of the twentieth century to the present, bringing together thirty artists from around the world including Francis Alÿs, Richard Long, Bruce Long (1941- ) and Robert Smithson. Coverley observes in his book *The art of wandering: the writer as walker*, (2012) that:

...as intellectual and cultural fashions have changed, so has the act of walking...as too have the criteria for establishing what constitutes a 'true' walker: from pilgrim to the pedestrian, the flâneur to the stalker. The language may change but the activity remains essentially the same.<sup>314</sup>

*Desire Lines* included six works by Francis Alÿs and perhaps the most relevant to my research was called *The Nightwatch*, a work made possible by the continuing collaboration between Alÿs, Rafael Ortega and Artangel. In the work it is a wild fox called Bandit who does the walking, alone at night, released to roam the august Tudor and Georgian rooms of the National Portrait Gallery, London. Alÿs said, he wanted to, '...address the omnipresence of CCTV cameras in London...' <sup>315</sup> and to this end, on '...the night of 7 April 2004, a fox was freed in the National Portrait Gallery. Its wanderings through the rooms were recorded by the institution's CCTV system.'<sup>316</sup> In his review of the exhibition for *The Age*, Melbourne, art critic Robert Nelson says of this work:

A fox is in the gallery. She darts about the lavish halls, where ancestors of rank gaze imperiously from their sombre varnish. The furtive fox is captured on security cameras, with rapid gait and twitching snout that belong to the wild. This gripping video from 2004 by the Belgian artist Francis Alÿs poetically invokes Rembrandt's *The Night Watch* in its title. The silent footage from the nocturnal museum surveillance juxtaposes august cultural authority with the quivering impulse of the renegade...At the end, the fox springs onto an ornamental table and curls up, exhausted with the sterility of the spotless palace. Her vulpine pathways - both criminal and pitiable - narrate a whole story, a histogram of hope, fear and despair. Set against the nobility that defines nature as alien, these wretched tracks of abject impulse represent the tearaway in all of us, the darting urge of rebellious thought which animates a mind that cannot conform.<sup>317</sup>

I spent hours sitting on the couch opposite the screen showing *The Nightwatch*. I was not only captivated by the actions of a wrong-footed animal in a strange land, I was also trying to take coherent images of the constantly moving fox for use in this document. The fox has historically

<sup>313</sup> Stephens, A 2012, 'The path less travelled', exhibition review, *Sydney Morning Herald, Entertainment*, 15 December, viewed 6 January 2012, <<http://www.smh.com.au>>.

<sup>314</sup> Coverley, M 2012, *The art of wandering: the writer as walker*, Oldcastle Books, Harpenden, p. 14.

<sup>315</sup> Alÿs, F, Godfrey, M (ed.) 2010, *Francis Alÿs: a story of deception*, exhibition catalogue, 15 June-5 September 2010, Tate Modern, Tate Publishing, London, UK, p. 149.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid., pp. 148-149.

<sup>317</sup> Nelson, R 2012, 'Tracing the reckless paths of desire', exhibition review, *The Age, The Arts*, Wednesday, December 19, p. 15.

been a divisive creature. Alÿs and historian, curator and collaborator, Cuauhtémoc Medina say the fox in the video is representative of the animal playing, ‘...the role of the trickster of myths and fables: the cunning underdog, able to neutralise the aura of the powers that be.’<sup>318</sup> The tension in the work is generated by the anxious-making intersection of the revered gallery and the wild animal – the precious momentarily coexisting with the destructive wild beast. It is disturbing when the animal jumps up onto centuries-old pieces of oak furniture. It is disturbing as it sits below a painting and reaches up, touching the surface lightly with its paw, hopeful that there might be something familiar in the barren and hostile place in which it is trapped. I was oblivious to time as I sat staring at the screen and photographing, watching the loop over and over again. At ACCA the work was presented as a single-channel, single screen video, nineteen minutes in duration.<sup>319</sup> The work is also shown as a twenty-monitor video of similar duration. In this format the work mimics the bank of screens in a surveillance station. *The Nightwatch* was shown in surveillance station format in the retrospective exhibition, *Francis Alÿs A Story of Deception*, at the Tate in 2010 and as part of the *Francis Alÿs Seven Walks* exhibition in 2013 at Art Exchange, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester. Medina and Alÿs point out, ‘...at the same time as the omnipresence of CCTV cameras has made London the city with the most surveillance on the planet, the overall urbanization of the British Isles has pushed the wild foxes back into urban territory, turning them into a common pest.’<sup>320</sup> In Australia the fox has also been driven into the suburbs and the cities. In Melbourne alone the Australian red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) inhabits the hallowed grounds of the Royal Botanic Gardens (as I saw for myself as I walked the Tan Track circling the Royal Botanic Gardens between 1990 and 1994), the Melbourne docks, and the leafy green outer ring of suburbs surrounding Melbourne.



PLATE 34 IMAGES 79-81

Francis Alÿs, *The Nightwatch*, 2004, (two views)

iPhone images Greer Honeywill

Francis Alÿs, *The Nightwatch*, 2004, part of the ‘Francis Alÿs: Seven Walks’, exhibition 2013, Art Exchange, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, (twenty-screen presentation)

<sup>318</sup> Alÿs, F, Godfrey, M (ed.) 2010, *Francis Alÿs: a story of deception*, exhibition catalogue, 15 June-5 September 2010, Tate Modern, Tate Publishing, London, UK, p. 149.

<sup>319</sup> Note: the duration of this piece is quoted variously from eight minutes to nineteen minutes in reliable sources. The Tate Gallery and Artangel list the duration as nineteen minutes for the twenty-monitor installation.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

Alÿs was not the first to free a wild animal in a gallery. In 1974 Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) predated Alÿs by thirty years when he cohabited for three days with a fox-like, coyote. The Tate owns a pair of works and documentation from this performative event titled *I like America and America likes me*. *Coyote I* depicts the left over detritus after the performance or ‘action’ – remnant pieces of the felt protection worn by Beuys and piles of folded Wall Street Journals. The works also provide documentary proof of the ‘action’. The caption for the works reads:

The *action* began as soon as the artist landed in America. He was wrapped in felt at the airport, and driven in an ambulance to René Block’s Manhattan gallery. He spent three days in the gallery space with a coyote before being driven straight back to the airport and flown home. The coyote is sacred to Native Americans, and represented an aspect of the country’s past that Beuys liked. Each day of the *action*, he made two piles of the current ‘Wall Street Journal’. These would be duly torn or urinated on by the coyote – his statement on contemporary America.<sup>321</sup>



PLATE 35 IMAGES 82-83

Joseph Beuys, *Coyote I*, 1980 and performance shot 1974  
Collection, Tate, UK, acquired 2008  
Photographer Caroline Tisdall

Perhaps it was a collective human desire among the new colonists of Australia, a longing to extend the remembrance of home, that motivated free settlers to introduce the fox into the fox-free landscape. The sole purpose of the release was to ensure that the cherished event of hunting with horses and hounds would continue unabated in the new colony; and this pastime needed the preferred quarry – the fox. With the fox in situ English citizens could *feel* English in the unfamiliar and inhospitable environment of the developing colony. While the fox quickly flourished on the mainland it did not adapt in Tasmania. Veterinarian and writer David Obendorf says that it is, ‘...no coincidence that the heart of foxhunting in England

<sup>321</sup> Beuys, J 2008, Tate collections, *Coyote I*, 1980 and performance shot 1974, viewed April 2014, <<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/beuys-coyote-i-ar00695>>.

– a midlands town called Melton Mowbray – was reproduced in Van Diemen's Land.<sup>322</sup> The Tasmanian 'Melton Mowbray' sits on the Highland Lakes Road between the Midland Highway and Apsley, on the way to Bothwell. Anthony Trollope, a writer of the Victorian period, visited Tasmania in January 1872 and later wrote that, '...Tasmanians in their loyalty are almost English-mad.'<sup>323</sup> He continued, 'Everything in Tasmania is more English than is England herself.'<sup>324</sup> This is a phrase that has been constantly repeated if somewhat distorted, over time. Trollope, not a little envious, was actually referring to the bountiful fruits of great quality he discovered growing in Tasmania. He also observed, as did other visitors, that there existed within the colony of Van Diemen's Land perhaps a misplaced desire to establish the manners, customs, dress and success of the noble English tradition. On his tour of Tasmania Trollope visited Melton Mowbray saying:

We passed a place called Melton, at which a pack of hounds was formerly kept, – so called after the hunting metropolis of Leicestershire [in the UK]. Foxes, if there were foxes, would all be away into the mountains...hunting had belonged to the good old prosperous convict days, and had passed away with other Tasmanian glories.<sup>325</sup>



PLATE 36 IMAGE 84

'Hunting Foxes', David Obendorf

The Hunt Club, Melton Mowbray Hotel, Tasmania, circa 1830

Photographer unknown

It is strange indeed that the cunning fox, in a period of two centuries, has not established itself in Tasmania as it did on the mainland, although in recent years sightings, correct or otherwise, stimulated a frenzy of activity in support of a different kind of fox hunting. The story at the core of this local saga about young foxes deliberately set free in Tasmania more than a decade ago may have been no more than a myth, a hoax, a joke. A spiteful story that spread like a meme – accepted as truth. In this case it is not the fox who is the trickster, rather

<sup>322</sup> Obendorf, D 2010, 'Hunting Foxes', *Tasmanian Times*, viewed 18 April 2014, <<http://www.tasmaniantimes.com/index.php/article/hunting-foxes>>.

<sup>323</sup> Trollope, A 1873, *Australia and New Zealand vol. II*, Chapman and Hall, London, p. 38.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>325</sup> Trollope, A 1873, *Australia and New Zealand vol. II*, Chapman and Hall, London, pp. 49-50.

the hunter as trickster. By the time of my arrival in Tasmania in March of 2010 the fox, true to its history, had polarized the population of Tasmania. More than the possible presence of the predator itself, the spending of a reported \$40-50million dollars of public money on an eradication program without a proven fox kill seemed a bitter pill for many – a scenario worthy of Shakespeare's hand. The Fox Eradication Program, later the Invasive Species Program, of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment began in 2002 following stories of the intentional release of fox cubs into the landscape. The program was wound back in June of 2013. During that time stories about the success or otherwise of the program have been reported and published.<sup>326</sup> The question remains does the mythical fox exist in the arcadia that is Tasmania where every day, under the gaze of the spectator, the grandeur of the landscape is observed, veiled in ever changing atmospheric and light conditions. Trollope's *beauteous landscape* evokes the early colonial painters and their individual approach to the exotic and the sublime within a largely unknown, unknowable landscape. Artists like Eugene von Guerard (1811-1901), John Glover (1769-1849) and William Piguenit (1836-1914). James Elkins says of the power of the gaze:

...if we imagine the eyes as navigational devices, we do so in order *not* to come to terms with what seeing really is. Seeing is like hunting and like dreaming...It is entangled with the passions – jealousy, violence, possessiveness...Ultimately seeing alters the thing that is seen and transforms the seer. Seeing is metamorphosis, not mechanism.<sup>327</sup>

I began to imagine a project rich in irony guided by Roger Scruton's assertion that the photograph, '...is incapable of representing anything unreal: if a photograph is a photograph of a man, then there is some particular man of whom it is a photograph.'<sup>328</sup> Further supported

<sup>326</sup> From the inception of the Fox Eradication Program in 2002 to the appointment of an independent review (the results of which were released in April 2014), the fox eradication program has been the subject of journal and newspaper articles, national TV and radio coverage.

Newby, J 2002, 'Tassie Fox – A Biosecurity Threat', *ABC TV, Catalyst*, 12 September.

In the program, Dr Clive Marks, Head, Vertebrate Pest Research Department, Victorian Institute of Animal Sciences, commented that the introduction of fox cubs to the Tasmanian landscape [said to have occurred in 2000] was an act of bio-terrorism akin to September 11.

Townsend, I 2014, 'The great Tasmanian fox hunt', *ABC, Radio National, Background Briefing*, 4 May.

The program presented the highly critical findings of an independent review into the Fox Eradication Program. Townsend said, 'It seems a discredited story [a hoax] about fox cubs being released in Tasmania triggered a decade-long hunt...It was described as the greatest threat since the last ice age but despite millions of dollars of public funds spent on an eradication program, an independent review says there's been no evidence of foxes living in Tasmania.' Examples follow:

Kempton, H 2014, '\$50m fox hunt 'scandal'', *The Mercury*, Friday 2 May, p. 3.

In this newspaper article Associate Professor Graham Hall, University of New England, said, '...many of the errors and inconsistencies found with the program were related to basic scientific process and poor professional rigour.' The independent reviewers were quoted as saying, '...the fox taskforce had not found one living fox [in a 13 year period] despite the expenditure, the employment of a small 'army' of staff and 1080 baiting across the state.' The project has been labelled a 'major science scandal.'

<sup>327</sup> Elkins, J 1998, *The object stares back*, Harvest edition published by arrangement with Simon & Schuster, New York, pp. 11-12.

<sup>328</sup> Scruton, R 1981, 'Photography and representation', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 7, no. 3, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p. 579.



by the assertion made by Francis Alÿs, ‘...sometimes doing something poetic can be political, and sometimes doing something political can be poetic.’<sup>329</sup> Surveying the Tasmanian landscape I recalled the unsettling feeling experienced as a new resident while standing in the breathtaking natural environment. I recognised the grandeur but somehow, unexpectedly, I was overcome by the brooding qualities reflected back to me – like an unexplainable mist of shadows and secrets. Like Anthony Trollope one could see the beauty everywhere. The curious thing was that one sensed something less tangible – a vaporous undercurrent mixed with guilt? Casey says the, ‘...venture, the adventure, of the glance is to go out into the domain of the unfamiliar, whether hoped for or feared, and to witness what happens there – come what may.’ Casey’s support for intuitive curiosity is, as he maintains, in contrast to Heidegger for instance, who dismissed curiosity as being on a par with gossip.<sup>330</sup>

Trollope said in 1872, ‘It seems hard to say of a new colony, not yet seventy years old, that it has seen the best of its days and that it is falling into decay, that its short period of importance in the world is already gone, and that for the future it must exist...on the relics which the past has left behind.’<sup>331</sup> The comment related in large part to observations and stories of indescribable punitive behaviour meted out by citizens in charge of convicts. The inhuman conditions visited upon the imprisoned and the workers in gangs. And the extreme poverty and degradation experienced by citizens living outside the cities of Launceston and Hobart. To this list can be added the slaughter of individual Aborigines, the killing of Aborigines by introduced disease and by organized genocide. For a colony beset by problems the final blow, which would have had a devastating effect on the Tasmanian economy, was the loss of income from England once the citizenry called for a permanent halt to incoming convicts. All of this in the arcadia described by Trollope as this, ‘...beautiful island, the sweetest in climate, the loveliest in scenery, the richest in rivers and harbours...’<sup>332</sup> I looked again at the landscape. Did a fox look back? I know foxes well and in their watchfulness they know more about us than we do of them. A two-fold intervention was central to the project. The disruptive placement of a fox or foxes in the landscape and the photographic record of this intervention as a document of ‘proof’ that foxes ‘exist’ in Tasmania. An ironic play with the political and the poetic inspired by Alÿs’ statement and Scruton’s assertion about the integrity of the photograph.

As humans we have never been entirely at rest with the totality of the landscape, especially the non-humans who live in the landscape or even the farmed animals that find their way to our dinner tables as ‘delicious food’. In conversation with Christian Boltanski we talked

<sup>329</sup> Alÿs, F, Godfrey, M (ed.) 2010, *Francis Alÿs: a story of deception*, exhibition catalogue, 15 June-5 September 2010, Tate Modern, Tate Publishing, London, UK, p. 143.

<sup>330</sup> Casey, ES 2007, *The world at a glance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, pp. 467-468.

<sup>331</sup> Trollope, A 1873, *Australia and New Zealand vol. II*, Chapman and Hall, London, p. 1.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., p. 3.



about Marcel Proust. Boltanski said that, ‘...to be alive is to die and to kill. We have lost our connection to the land, the recognition of the tree is now refused.’<sup>333</sup> What he meant was that the natural relationship engendered by tilling the soil, planting, harvesting, farming animals, killing as required for personal consumption, preparing the kill for the dinner table and eating the produce has been lost. Even if, as happened in Proust’s account, the cook created a somewhat murderous scene in the kitchen. This is a process that creates of necessity, an intimate connection to the seasons, human sustenance and the life cycle of the killed. As opposed to supermarket convenience wrapped in plastic.<sup>334</sup>

Through her lens Claudia Terstappen (1959-) has for over three decades, recorded the landscape in countries around the world. In late 2013 Terstappen’s exhibition, *In the Shadow of Change* opened at the Monash Gallery of Art (MGA), Wheelers Hill, Victoria, the artist guiding me through her exhibition on Wednesday, 20 November 2013. The exhibition evoked memories of Peter Dombrovskis’ photographs of the Gordon River three decades ago, photographs that helped prevent the construction of the Franklin Dam in Tasmania. This was one of the defining moments in Australian photography when landscape photographs actually brought about significant social and political change. Terstappen is conscious of human intervention in the natural landscape saying of her photographs:

I look at them as vanished landscapes. I have become melancholic about this, because of the catastrophic loss we are facing. Landscape has become incredibly political, but the environment has never been so contested...there is a moral dimension to looking at landscape images today. It is not just the landscapes that are disappearing, it’s the stories and cultural ties that go with them.<sup>335</sup>

Research and preparation for my project, a series of photographs documenting an intervention in the landscape, was conducted in a manner similar to the procedure of the American photographer, Gregory Crewdson (1962-), although on a vastly smaller scale. Embracing chance gives way in this project to an attempt to control the scene although total control, especially of natural atmospheric conditions is impossible no matter how planned and rehearsed. Instead of Crewdson’s figures, foxes populate the landscape creating intentional interplay between reality and fiction. While Crewdson’s works are cinematic my aim was to connect with both the documentary and the cinematic, an approach evoking Rebecca Shanahan. You will recall Shanahan saying in section 3, chapter 4, that in her photographic work she aims to, ‘...merge the cinematic approach with the documentary approach.’<sup>336</sup> When talking to Shanahan I asked

<sup>333</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 12 October.

<sup>334</sup> Proust, M, Scott Moncrieff, CK & Kilmartin, T (translation), Enright, DJ (revised) 1992, *In search of lost time*, vol. I (1913), ‘Swann’s Way’, The Modern Library, New York, pp. 169-171.

<sup>335</sup> Terstappen, C, Lakin, S (ed.) 2013, *In the shadow of change*, exhibition catalogue, 9 November 2013-19 January 2014, Monash Gallery of Art, Victoria, AUS, n.p.

<sup>336</sup> Shanahan, R 2013, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 16 October.

if she had been influenced by Gregory Crewdson and she replied, 'I think the psychological dimension of what he does is marvellous...I love his film literacy. As a photographer one is often impressed by his technique and mastery and one is deeply envious of his crew because he has a crew of hundreds and I think all of us would like the opportunity to work that way at some stage.'<sup>337</sup>

In 2012 Gregory Crewdson's exhibition, *In a Lonely Place*, was shown at the Centre for Contemporary Photography (CCP), as part of the Melbourne Festival. In support of the exhibition Crewdson gave a talk at the RMIT University, Capitol Theatre, on 10 October 2012. I viewed the exhibition *In a Lonely Place* and attended the talk. Originally this was to have been an artist talk with images. Sadly all technology failed on the evening and after an hour, with the full house getting restless, it was decided to proceed with a conversation led by Naomi Cass, Director of CCP. In answer to a question about how he gets the performance and lighting right for each image Crewdson answered by saying, 'I don't know I just have this image within me...I tell the story in light. I get it wrong because I never get it right. All the production or technology in the world will not change that. I always get it wrong.'<sup>338</sup> Which reminds me of Gerhard Richter's response to an interview question put by Robert Storr, the curator of his retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in 2002. When asked about hierarchies of subject matter in his painting Richter replied, 'I never knew what I was doing. What am I supposed to say now?' Hustvedt says, '...it is the ongoing torment (as well as narcissistic pleasure) of artists to be interrogated and analysed and sometimes their responses are unexpected (to themselves and to the audience).'<sup>339</sup> The mix of experience, intuition and imagination that builds the image in the mind of someone like Crewdson (or Richter) is a shifting entity of layers and mirrors that cannot be pinned down, and can never be replicated with the exactness imagined. We are, each of us in our own way, looking for that unexplainable present moment when everything seems to come together.

Two cameras would be employed for my project. The iPhone camera would be utilised for the preparatory phase, the recording of possible sites and site details, and a digital SLR (Nikon D 800) would be used to capture the constructed scenes to be printed at reasonable scale (approximately 1 metre wide). The search began for arcadian landscapes that might inspire that anxious-making intersection evident in Alÿs' work, *The Nightwatch*. I looked for the kind of arcadian landscape that inspires both pride and affection in Tasmanians. Landscapes not in any way associated with the presence of the fox. Like the projects of Christo (1935- ) and

<sup>337</sup> Shanahan, R 2013, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 16 October.

<sup>338</sup> Crewdson, G 2012, Live interview with Naomi Cass, Director CCP, Melbourne, RMIT University, Capitol Theatre, Melbourne, 10 October.

<sup>339</sup> Hustvedt, S 2012, *Living, thinking, looking*, Sceptre, London, p. 287.

Jeanne-Claude (1935-2009)<sup>340</sup>, every detail becomes part of the work from the moment of conception to the more obvious final decisions about scale and presentation. Each difficulty or barrier is a problem to be solved, and there were many. The majority of problems related to access not art making. There was also a need for the beast, the fox, to insert into the landscape, to raise questions about what is real and who is the observer. Using the on-line sale site Gumtree (gumtree.com.au) I located two taxidermy specimens in Victoria and decided to purchase both. The foxes were brought into Tasmania with the approval of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment – Quarantine Tasmania. There was nothing covert about the importation.

I gathered together a team of four under my direction. The team included lighting, camera and studio assistants, expanding when specific requirements were necessary, such as safety harnesses and basic on site catering when the shoot ran late. The final sites chosen included:

- The stone stables of Shene at Pontville built by convict labour in 1851, a statement of wealth and power by early colonialist Gamaliel Butler.
- Goat Bluff at South Arm looking to the ocean, Betsey Island and a small lighthouse.
- Mt Field National Park between Horseshoe Falls and the apex of Russell Falls, lit by natural light funnelled down through some of the tallest trees on our continent.
- Kinvarra homestead at Plenty, a Georgian house built in 1827 with links back to (mad) King George III of England.
- The bridge in the village of Richmond built by convict labour and completed in 1825.
- The Nyrstar zinc works seen from across the Derwent River, a dystopian arcadia. Curiously Tasmanians have a particular attachment to the savage beauty of the industrial landscape.

In the preparatory phase I moved unendingly within the landscape, walking my *ever present eye* (the iPhone) into position to gather data, to log the possibilities of discovered sites, the changing atmospheric and light conditions, existing built form and the unexpected. Images used in the development of a performative narrative – a protocol to guide the shoot. I looked at the beauty of the landscape and the landscape looked back – with a gaze filled with atmospheres blooded in centuries-old biblical beliefs that man holds dominion over all creatures and the land (just as many continue to believe today, albeit a secular version of the doctrine).<sup>341</sup> That everything not feared by man must be tamed or brought to the will of man. And that which is feared and cannot be dominated must be destroyed. The landscape is a mirror – I gazed at the landscape and it looked back in ways unimagined.

Four months into the six-month long shoot, frustrated with the lack of flexibility in my fox

<sup>340</sup> Christo Javacheff (Hristo Vladimirov Yavachev) and Jeanne-Claude Denat de Guillebon.

<sup>341</sup> Unknown translators 1912, 'Genesis, Chapter 1:26', *The Holy Bible*, The British and Foreign Bible Society, Oxford University Press, London, p. 2.

'And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth'.

specimens I approached the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery in the hope that they might be able to provide a loan specimen. While the director was supportive the relevant curator was understandably not happy about the idea of removing from display the only fox specimen in the collection. Without consulting me the curator passed on my data to the Invasive Species Program, an act I considered a betrayal of confidence. However, when contacted proactively by one of the officers of the Invasive Species Program I was assured he was happy to help by loaning me one or more of the many fox specimens used for school talks. From his point of view anything that might assist in the recognition of the animal was beneficial. While carrying one of the newly loaned foxes down Hunter Street toward my studio a man stopped me to ask if the animal was a fox. The man was in his mid-sixties and this is only relevant because he said he had lived in Tasmania all his life and he had never seen a fox. It was a brief conversation and the man seemed pleased that he had finally seen an example of the much-discussed animal, the odd figure in the Tasmanian landscape. He now had proof of a kind. This is a particularly Tasmanian story and I may struggle to entice mainlanders with their myriad fox experiences, into the same space, the space identified by Samuel Taylor Coleridge as the suspension of disbelief. The English poet and philosopher writing about the approach to his lyrical ballads in *Biographica Literaria* said:

...it was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith.<sup>342</sup>

The title for the series was suggested to me. *Et in Arcadia Ego* is a title borrowed from Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) and his two pastoral paintings depicting shepherds dressed in classical attire gathered at a tomb in the landscape. When I looked into the translation of the phrase a little more closely, I found the phrase to be as contentious as the fox itself. It would appear that *Et in Arcadia Ego* was originally the title of a painting by the Italian Baroque artist Giovanni Francesco Barbieri known as Guercina (1591-1666) who completed the piece between 1618-1622. Guercina's version was a memento mori depicting two shepherds in an Arcadian landscape staring at a human skull resting on a remnant ruin on which the words *Et in Arcadia Ego* were engraved. Subsequently Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) revised or re-presented the theme in two paintings.<sup>343</sup> The first version (*Arcadian Shepherds*), a reworking of Guercina's painting, was completed in 1627 and is held by Chatsworth House, a grand estate open to the public, in Derbyshire, UK, and the second painting (*Les bergers d'Arcadie*), completed between 1663 and

<sup>342</sup> Coleridge, ST, Shawcross, J (ed.) 1907, *Biographica literaria: or biographical sketches of my literary life and opinions*, vol. II (1817), The Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 5.

<sup>343</sup> Panofsky, E 1955, 'Et in arcadia ego': Poussin and the elegiac tradition', *Meaning in the visual arts*, Doubleday Anchor Books, New York, p. 257.

1638, is held by the Louvre Museum, Paris. The meaning of the title altered somewhat from painting to painting because of the changes Poussin made to elements of the composition. German art historian, Erwin Panofsky believed the correct translation of *Et in Arcadia Ego* for the first painting was ‘even in Arcady, there I am,’ [the ‘I’ meaning death]. Panofsky said, ‘...we may say that those who, under the impact of the Louvre picture, decided to render the phrase...as “I, too, lived in Arcady”, rather than as “Even in Arcady, there I am”, did violence to Latin grammar but justice to the new meaning of Poussin’s [later] composition.’<sup>344</sup> The Dutch art historian Henri Van de Waal maintains that Panofsky’s translation of the phrase as, “...even in Arcady there I am”, and thus speaks death, remains the most viable interpretation” of the phrase itself.<sup>345</sup>

The question then arose, where did the phrase come from? Panofsky, writing on *The Eclogues of Vergil* says that it, ‘...was in the imagination of Vergil, and of Vergil alone, that the concept of Arcady as we know it was born...’ and by projecting, ‘...tragedy either into the future or, preferably, into the past...’ he [Vergil] thereby, ‘...transforms mythical truth into elegiac sentiment.’<sup>346</sup> Panofsky continues saying that in, ‘[Vergil’s] Fifth Eclogue, Daphnis has retained his identity; but – and this is the novelty – his tragedy is presented to us only through the elegiac reminiscences of his survivors, who are preparing a memorial ceremony and are about to raise a tombstone for him...Here, then, is the first appearance of the ‘Tomb in Arcady,’ that almost indispensable feature of Arcady in later poetry and art.’<sup>347</sup> Panofsky says, ‘In Jacopo Sannazaro’s [poem] *Arcadia* of 1502...Arcady is, like Virgil’s, a Utopian realm. But in addition, it is a realm irretrievably lost, seen through a veil of reminiscent melancholy...’<sup>348</sup> A phrase hovering somewhere between Trollope’s view of a decaying Tasmania in 1873 and my reaction to what I called ‘a vaporous undercurrent mixed with guilt’, unexpectedly mirrored in the returned gaze of the landscape.

In 1969 Princeton University Library staged an exhibition, *Meaning in the visual arts: an exhibition suggested by the writings of Erwin Panofsky*. The exhibition included Panofsky’s analysis of images and meanings attributed to the phrase *Et in Arcadia Ego*. Historically among the first to proffer a meaning was Poussin’s friend Giovanni Pietro Bellori (1613-1696). In 1672 Bellori is said to have provided a correct meaning of the inscription as the grave is to be found in Arcady and that death occurs in the very midst of delight. Framed in the present

<sup>344</sup> Panofsky, E 1955, “Et in arcadia ego”: Poussin and the elegiac tradition’, *Meaning in the visual arts*, Doubleday Anchor Books, New York, p. 260.

<sup>345</sup> Van de Waal, H 1972, *In memoriam: Erwin Panofsky*, B.V. Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij, Amsterdam, p. 235.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid., pp. 300-301.

<sup>347</sup> Panofsky, E 1955, “Et in arcadia ego”: Poussin and the elegiac tradition’, *Meaning in the visual arts*, Doubleday Anchor Books, New York, pp. 302.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid., pp. 303-304.

tense.<sup>349</sup> Later, critic and art historian André Félibien, in circa 1685, substituted the occupant of the tomb for the tomb itself. Panofsky said by doing this, ‘...the whole phrase projected into the past: what had been a menace became remembrance,’ the art historian also felt this to be poor Latin.<sup>350</sup> Philosopher Denis Diderot in 1758 declared the meaning of the phrase to be, ‘I too have lived in Arcady,’ while writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in circa 1817 translated the phrase as ‘I, too, was in the land of joy and beauty,’ seemingly eliminating death entirely.<sup>351</sup> More contentiously writer Gustave Flaubert said in 1886 that the phrase was, ‘...a piece of nonsense the meaning of which I have been unable to discover.’<sup>352</sup> And near the end of the nineteenth century Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898) made a pen and ink drawing which he called, *Et in Arcadia Ego* (circa 1896). In the image a dandy (or perhaps a *flâneur*), is depicted as if caught on point, pausing before a pillar surmounted by an urn. Panofsky says, ‘...the very fact that it is impossible to decide whether the aged ‘Arcadian’ is the perpetrator or the victim of the joke endows Beardsley’s composition with the fictitious brilliance of Wildean paradox.’<sup>353</sup>



PLATE 37 IMAGE 85

Aubrey Beardsley, *Et in Arcadia Ego*, 1896, pen and ink drawing

More recently, *Et in Arcadia Ego* as a title has been used by the writer Evelyn Waugh as the title to book one of his novel *Brideshead Revisited: The Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder* (1945), and further it has been used by Danie Mellor (1973- ), an Australian artist with blood ties to both Indigenous and European cultures who, in his work, reflects on cultural intersections and myths. In Evelyn Waugh’s book Charles Ryder becomes part of

<sup>349</sup> Panofsky, E 1955, ‘Et in arcadia ego’: Poussin and the elegiac tradition’, *Meaning in the visual arts*, Doubleday Anchor Books, New York, p. 316.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid., pp. 316-317.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid., pp. 317-319.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid., p. 318.

<sup>353</sup> Dix, WS 1969, *Meaning in the visual arts: an exhibition suggested by the writings of Erwin Panofsky*, exhibition catalogue, 22 February-1 May 1969, Princeton University Library, New Jersey, US, p. 24.



the war effort with its heightened inevitability of death and Mellor's work has dealt with the conflict between the early colonialists and the natural inhabitants (animal and human) of the Australian landscape where death at the hands of the colonisers was common.

It was a sense of play and irony I sought for my photographs knowing that strongly held and opposing beliefs divided Tasmanians. The title itself contributing its layers of twisting history and a meaning as disputed as the fox itself. If the mythical fox in the photographs was really alive and well in Tasmania its fate would be death by hunting or poison. On the subject of myth, writer and academic, David Bidney believes myths to be an autonomous cultural form that cannot be explained by reduction to some other symbolic form, such as language. The mythical symbol is understood, not as a representation concealing some mystery or hidden truth, but as a self-contained interpretation of reality. In myth there is no distinction between the real and the ideal.<sup>354</sup>

In the process of making this series I have walked the camera into place just as artists before me walked to make art (including the early colonial plein air painters). Like Gregory Crewdson who talked about always getting the image 'wrong', imperfections occurred in the making of the images. As Crewdson knows, in the moment, as the eye casts a wider gaze, not everything can be precisely controlled. However, the imperfections that arise become important, illustrative of human frailty and our insignificant place in the world. It has taken me decades to arrive at an understanding that imperfection can be its own kind of perfection. That chance and imperfection often *live* together. These photographs are documents of the moment, documents of persuasion that offer *proof* of existence. The spectator is invited to agree or to dispute the veracity of the photograph. Perhaps I can be accused of attempting to create a myth just as Boltanski mythologises. After all, Bidney believed a myth to be a, '...central belief that appears in the course of history, which seizes upon human consciousness.'<sup>355</sup> Is that how Tasmanians were galvanised into the search for the absent fox in 2002? This is a story as much about life as it is about death. A story that exploits either the Shakespearean view of the fox as enemy or alternatively sees the role of the fox as, '...the trickster of myths and fables: the cunning underdog, able to neutralise the aura of the powers that be...' as Medina and Alÿs maintain.<sup>356</sup>

<sup>354</sup> Bidney, D 1955, 'Myth, symbolism, and truth', *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 68, no. 270, p. 383.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid., p. 383.

<sup>356</sup> Alÿs, F, Godfrey, M (ed.) 2010, *Francis Alÿs: a story of deception*, exhibition catalogue, 15 June-5 September 2010, Tate Modern, Tate Publishing, London, UK, p. 149.



PLATE 38 IMAGES 86-91

Greer Honeywill, *Et in Arcadia Ego* #1-#6, 2013-2015

Pigment prints, 100cm x 67cm

There was one more intervention that I wished to perpetrate before my play with Scruton and Alÿs was complete. I wanted to cast myself as the fox, to play the cunning trickster. In this mode I looked to the public billboard the domain of artists such as Jenny Holzer (1950- ) and Cindy Sherman (1954- ). The idea being to display one of the *Et in Arcadia Ego* images on a billboard as a public art intervention for the period of one month to elicit the remains (the entrails) of the fox debate that so consumed the public. Public artist Penny Diggs says, 'Billboard art often instigates a process, a questioning, or an argument about an issue or value that often goes unquestioned or unresolved in the public mind.'<sup>357</sup> Once the Invasive Species Program

<sup>357</sup> Diggs, P, in Steward Heon, L, Diggs, P & Dorin, L (essays), Thompson, J (foreword) 1999, 'Causing conversations, taking positions', *Billboard: art on the road*, exhibition catalogue, 28 May-28 September 1999, Mass MoCA, North Adams, Mass MoCA Publications-MIT Press, Cambridge, US, p. 33.

was wound back in June of 2013 all foreground conversation about the fox gradually faded away. Curator, Laura Steward Heon wrote that, ‘artist billboards are Trojan Horses, slipping into the environment almost unnoticed, then springing their message on us.’<sup>358</sup> In 1999, the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art staged a retrospective exhibition, *Billboard: Art on the Road*, covering thirty years of artist billboards and recognising the many artists who have used the billboard as a political intervention. Like the approach of artists included in this exhibition there will be no public statement, no identification, no directing of attention to the sign, merely an infiltration – an image that suddenly appears posing the question, *Are we in Arcadia?* The sign, 6m x 3m, is situated at a busy Hobart intersection (110 Liverpool Street, corner of Barrack Street) and will be visible from 19 January 2015 – 20 February 2015 (this public intervention preceding the public exhibition of *The Ever Present Eye* which opens on 20 February 2015). My approach has been secretive, like the fox. In a sense this is a disjunction because outdoor signage ‘belongs’ to the realm of advertising, a symbol of the past rather than Instagram, a symbol of the now with the possibility of far greater dissemination. But Instagram has no scale it does not physically intrude into public space, the everyday space through which the drivers and walkers of Hobart pass on a daily basis. As Elkins has said, ‘Ultimately seeing alters the thing that is seen and transforms the seer.’<sup>359</sup>



PLATE 39 IMAGE 92

Greer Honeywill ...*Are We In Arcadia?* 2015  
 Billboard corner Liverpool Street and Barrack Street, Hobart  
 19 January – 20 February 2015  
 600cm x 300cm

<sup>358</sup> Steward Heon, L, in Steward Heon, L, Diggs, P & Dorin, L (essays), Thompson, J (foreword) 1999, ‘Putting the show on the road’, *Billboard: art on the road*, exhibition catalogue, 28 May-28 September 1999, Mass MoCA, North Adams, Mass MoCA Publications-MIT Press, Cambridge, US, p. 9.

<sup>359</sup> Elkins, J 1998, *The object stares back*, Harvest edition published by arrangement with Simon & Schuster, New York, p. 11-12.

# 04

## 02 Playing with Mirrors

I liked the notion of finding strange parks at the edge of the city, of creating a walk that would allow you to enter into fiction.

– IAIN SINCLAIR<sup>360</sup>

In this chapter I look at ‘extending the moment’ through the act of appropriation or duplication. Like walking there are numerous terms that can be applied to what I prefer to call re-presentation. Re-presentation is a divisive approach (as divisive as the existence of the fox in Tasmania) practiced over centuries by artists for a variety of reasons and often as a means of learning. Today the practice of re-presentation is gaining increasing attention in the form of major exhibitions. Sometimes the camera is implicated in the re-presentation and just as often it is not. Director of the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Juliana Engberg writes in her catalogue introduction for *Christian Capurro’s: SLAVE*:

Back in 1998, when [Douglas] Gordon was enacting his pirating, sanctioned by postmodern appropriation strategies, it still seemed impudent to bootleg another artist’s art. Now it seems easy and inevitable, but it still seems audacious. And the fact remains that very few artists actually take the work of another and make it their own. When they do it is still generally within theoretically defined postmodern concepts – ideas brought firmly into focus by Sherrie Levine’s appropriation of Walker Evans’ photographs...’<sup>361</sup>

In this chapter I look at a specific work that I have chosen to re-present in order to learn about the work itself, how it was made, and the theoretical point of view of the artist at that time. My re-presentation will be a generational repetition made after nearly five decades. The work titled *Mirror Work* exists as a photograph of a single ephemeral, performative act – a gestural intervention in the landscape performed by Bruce McLean in 1969. While the work has always been attributed to McLean documentary evidence exists because friend and collaborator Dirk Buwalda (1947-2009) took photographs of the intervention. Like Capurro I do not question

<sup>360</sup> Sinclair, I, in Coverley, M 2012, *The art of wandering: the writer as walker*, Oldcastle Books, Harpenden, p. 210.

<sup>361</sup> Engberg, J, ‘Introduction’, in Capurro, C 2014, *Christian Capurro: SLAVE*, exhibition catalogue, 16 August-28 September 2014, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, AUS, n.p.



the authorship or deny the original. It is important that the act of re-presentation is declared rather than hidden. In this chapter I also look at a selection of artists currently engaged in the practice of re-presentation. It is the generational aspect of re-presentation that creates for the work (and the originator) an extra life. Walter Benjamin talked about the urgency that often accompanies looking, ‘...[e]very day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction.’<sup>362</sup>

The early works of Bruce McLean, made in the late sixties and early seventies, frequently involved the performance of ephemeral gestures of a playful and ironic nature. These performative gestures were often made at the endpoint of a walk or were the reason for the walk. McLean’s *Taking a Line for a Walk*, 1969, referred to in the previous chapter, is a good example. These walks were not the long and arduous walking expeditions one would associate with Richard Long, rather they were acts of urban perambulation more in tune with the flâneur of Baudelaire and Benjamin, botanising on the asphalt in Barnes High Street or within the expansive landscapes of nearby Barnes Common. While McLean’s performative action disappeared almost in the instant, the photographic document of the gesture has preserved that moment for more than four decades and one of the photographs taken on that day has become somewhat iconic (refer to plate 40 image 93). As Elaine Scarry says (refer section 2, chapter 1) the observance of beauty promotes, ‘the act of replication.’<sup>363</sup> Buwalda’s photograph of the gestural intervention became the exhibitable artefact, critical to extending the life of the work. *Mirror Work* exists as two monotone photographs of which I am aware. In one the leaves of the oak tree under which McLean was positioned are reflected in a mirror that obscures part of the artist’s body replacing it with an arboreal image at once connected and disconnected from reality. Reminiscent of the inverted arboreal scene visible in the mirror of the dresser being moved into a removalist’s truck in Nabakov’s novel, *The Gift* (refer section 2, chapter 1). In the second photograph the built form surrounding Barnes Common is visible. The act of walking into the park placed McLean in the landscape and the endpoint was standing under a magnificent, broadboughed Oak tree holding a mirror under his arm. This simple performative act linked across the decades to the exploration of wonder within my research, the chance discovery of the reflective *innocent eye* and a renewed interest in writings and works linked to walking.

<sup>362</sup> Benjamin, W 1936, ‘The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction’, in Arendt, H (ed.), Zohn, H (translator) 1969, *Illuminations: essays and reflections*, Schocken, New York, p. 223.

<sup>363</sup> Scarry, E 1999, *On beauty and being just*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, p. 3.



PLATE 40 IMAGE 93

Bruce McLean, *Mirror Work*, 1969

Photograph Dirk Buwalda

McLean's work raised questions about the document maker (the photographer). The two met as students at St Martin's School of Art in London in 1965. Buwalda says of this time our, '... friendship began with a joke...Bruce has always made me laugh...Everything Bruce touches mirrors his energy...it attracted me to do things with him ...'<sup>364</sup> Their easy friendship and subsequent collaborations were founded in the beginning on spontaneity and fun however, there was an underlying interest in testing the theoretical propositions of the day particularly related to the idea of the body as sculpture. It seems unfortunate that it is only recently the collaborative process existing between the two, is now being taken seriously by scholars. In preparation for an exhibition at David Roberts Art Foundation titled, *Study: Pose Piece For Three Plinths Work* in 2012-13, curator Sandra Pusterhofer interviewed McLean. The influential work upon which the exhibition is based, *Poses Work for Plinths I*, was originally made in 1971 and the photographic document of the work, taken by Buwalda, is held within the collections of the Tate and the David Roberts Art Foundation. The following text appeared in Pusterhofer's catalogue:

SP: Photographs as records of the work and a photograph that was intended as a work are two different things. Works such as *Fallen Warrior* (1969) for example were made as a work, whereas *Pose Piece For Three Plinths Work* was a documentation of an event. Do you see the staged photographic works as a collaboration between you and the photographer?

BM: Yes. Works like...*Take a Line for a Walk*, 1969, were taken by a good friend of mine Dirk Buwalda. He was very good because he could make me look the way I wanted to look. He took the photograph before I was into the pose before you nodded he got you. And then it was a nod it wasn't a post nod, [or] pre-nod...there weren't a lot of people

<sup>364</sup> Buwalda, D 2009, *Pieces and poses 1965-2008: Dirk Buwalda photographs Bruce McLean*, De Verbeelding Publishing, Amsterdam, n.p.



taking photographs as art at the time.<sup>365</sup>

The fact that McLean and Buwalda both lived in Barnes made it easy for them to work together. Often they would begin their thinking at The Bull's Head pub and then meander down Barnes High Street looking for possibilities in an opportunistic manner.<sup>366</sup>

In 2009 a book was published chronicling Buwalda's photographs of Bruce McLean's work between 1965 and 2008 and *Mirror Work*, 1969, was discussed by both of the artists. In the book Dirk Buwalda describes a relationship where the separation between art and life is blurred and the everyday experience of life lived is as much art as it is life:

On one occasion I saw some cheap mirrors outside the antique shop. I bought them and we wandered into the park [Barnes Common].

'Why don't you stand over there and hold this mirror under your arm,' I said to him.

'What do you see Dirk?' asked Bruce, posing as requested.

'I see two parks. It looks good,' I replied. Click. Click. That was it.<sup>367</sup>

Buwalda said he saw two parks in the mirror. What he really saw were two worlds, one alluding to nature and the other to human habitation, social structures and desire. It was D.H. Lawrence who said the, '... business of art is to reveal the relation between man [woman] and his circumambient universe at the living moment.'<sup>368</sup> *Mirror Work* is about the moment, a moment that could never be exactly repeated – a moment that passed with the click of the camera shutter. Recall Pierre Hadot in section 3 chapter 2, saying, '...we possess the whole of reality within the present instant, and even infinite duration could not give us more...'<sup>369</sup>

Art critic and writer, Mel Gooding, who McLean also met in a local pub in Barnes, wrote of both Bruce McLean and *Mirror Work* in his book *Song of the Earth*, published in 2002. Gooding observes that McLean, in making his early performative works, was pushing against:

...the arbitrary formalism of much of the abstract art of the sixties. These early works... have a poetic resonance, and carry a sense of his wonder at the inventiveness of nature as artist-collaborator. His sense also that landscape painting as a genre was no longer adequate as a response to the dynamism of nature is wittily registered in the *Mirror Works* of 1969, in which the treescape of Barnes Common in south-west London is temporarily reflected in the mirror, and is retained only as a trace of a moment's light in Dirk Buwalda's photographs.<sup>370</sup>

<sup>365</sup> McLean, B 2013, *Study: pose piece for three plinths work*, exhibition catalogue, 17 January – 16 February 2013, David Roberts Art Foundation (DRAF), London, UK, n.p.

<sup>366</sup> Buwalda, D 2009, *Pieces and poses 1965-2008: Dirk Buwalda photographs Bruce McLean*, De Verbeelding Publishing, Amsterdam, n.p.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid., n.p.

<sup>368</sup> Stewart, J 1999, *The vital art of D.H. Lawrence: vision and expression*, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, p. 158.

<sup>369</sup> Hadot, P, Davidson, AI (ed.), Chase, M (translation), 1995, *Philosophy as a way of life: spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, p. 228.

<sup>370</sup> Gooding, M, Furlong, W (interviews) 2002, *Song of the earth*, Thames and Hudson, London, p. 36.

Mirrors have long fascinated artists and McLean and Buwalda were not the first artists in the twentieth century to experiment with reflections. In her catalogue essay for *Mirror Mirror: Then and Now*, Anne Stephens writes in particular about László Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946) and his time at the Bauhaus between 1923 and 1928 when he used mirrors as a way of seeing, ‘the world with entirely different eyes.’<sup>371</sup> Although Moholy-Nagy taught across several disciplines, he was particularly interested in the camera, photography and the difference between what the eye and the camera could see.

The question kept re-surfacing – why has the arboreal version of *Mirror Work* endured where many thousands of images have faded into obscurity? As much as Buwalda and McLean say the action was spontaneous, there were underlying ideas being explored at the time about the dematerializing of art, the body as statue and the emergence of the idea as more important than the object or its ‘thingness’ – ideas about which McLean and Buwalda would have been aware. McLean has indicated that reaching the point of recognition that the body could become a sculptural vehicle was both intoxicating and empowering.

...it was when we [a collective] invented the concept of ‘pose’ that we could do anything. Pose was a live sculpture: not mime, not theatre, but live sculpture...<sup>372</sup>

Gooding says of works such as *Mirror Work* and *Poses Work for Plinths I*, 1971, that the, ‘... point of their making, the arrangement of the objects and of the poses, was that they were to be photographed, and they had no existence independent of that fact.’<sup>373</sup> McLean’s *Pose Work for Plinths I* is a series of ungainly physical poses made using his body and three plinths. The work was initially performed live in a space called Situation and later recreated for the camera. His poses mocked and critiqued traditional sculpture and in particular the weight of Henry Moore’s sculptural works. A decade later the Tate, London, purchased *Pose Work for Plinths I*. Fun, spontaneity and the spirit of experimentation were clearly at play as were shared ideas and knowledge of international art influences. And those influences live on – made present today

<sup>371</sup> Stephen, A (curator), Broadfoot, K & McNamara, A (essays) 2009, *Mirror mirror: then and now*, exhibition catalogue, touring exhibition, 24 October-12 December 2009, Institute of Modern Art, Queensland, AUS, 4 January-2 May 2010, University Art Gallery, University of Sydney, AUS, 14 May -16 July 2010, Samstag Museum of Art, Adelaide, AUS, p. 5.

<sup>372</sup> McLean, B 2014, *Tanya Leighton Gallery* (McLean’s representing gallery, Berlin), viewed 19 January 2014, <<http://www.tanyaleighton.com>>.

<sup>373</sup> Buwalda, D 2009, *Pieces and poses 1965-2008: Dirk Buwalda photographs Bruce McLean*, De Verbeelding Publishing, Amsterdam, n.p.

by Australian artists and collaborators Clark Beaumont.<sup>374</sup>

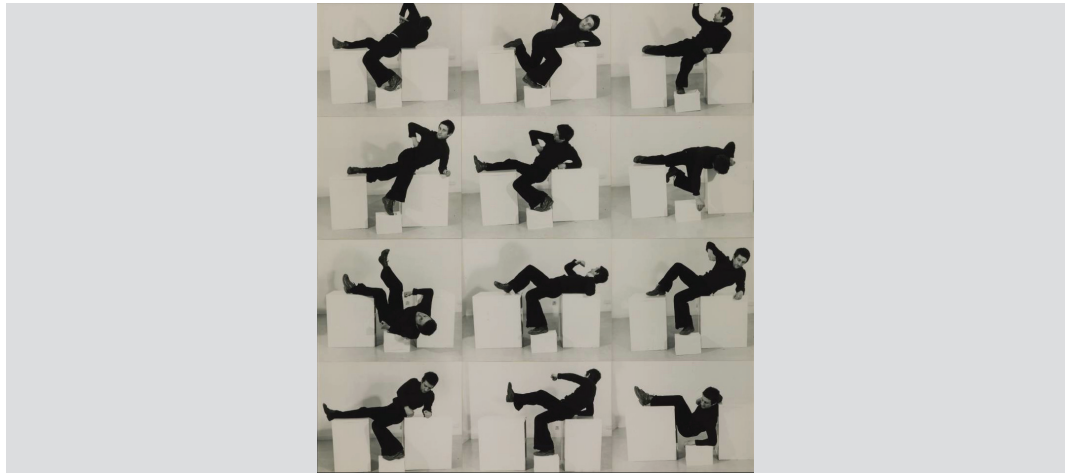


PLATE 41 IMAGE 94

Bruce McLean, *Poses Work for Plinths III*, 1971  
Photograph Dirk Buwalda

*Mirror Work* and *Poses Work for Plinths I* became important markers for the state of thinking in the UK in the sixties. It was a time, Gooding says, filled with post war optimism and the influence of, ‘... American Pop Art, particularly that of Claes Oldenburg [1929- ] and Andy Warhol [1928-1987], and in the assemblage and mixed media work of Robert Rauschenberg [1925-2008]...’<sup>375</sup> McLean was drawn to the notion of collaboration across artistic barriers which he observed in the approach of the Fluxus artists and the fact that ‘...American Pop seemed to suggest that art might be involved with life in ways both critical and celebratory...’<sup>376</sup>

<sup>374</sup> *Poses Work for Plinths I* was recently made present by the work of Sarah Clark (1990- ) and Nicole Beaumont (1991- ), known collectively as Clark Beaumont. The two began a collaborative practice in 2010. They took part in the John Kaldor Public Art Project #27, *13 Rooms*, curated by Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Co-Director of the Serpentine Gallery, London and Klaus Biesenbach, Director of MoMA PS1. *13 Rooms* was staged in April 2013 at Pier 2/3, Walsh Bay, Sydney, and Clark Beaumont performed by posing together on the confining space of a gallery plinth set in the centre of a small enclosed room. The work called *Coexisting*, 2013, was a test of their physical endurance, humour and the use of the body as living sculpture. As the two performed, they were required to constantly negotiate and cooperate throughout each of the eleven days of the exhibition between the hours of 11.00am and 7.00pm with only very brief rest periods. With the passing of each day the bruising on the bare legs of each performer became increasingly obvious. Once the performance stopped the work vanished. It lives on in the minds of the artists and the memories of spectators like me who visited the work and most importantly the work remains present as photographic documentation.

Also part of this program was a re-presentation of a Marina Abramovic (1946- ) work titled *Luminosity*, 1997-2012, performed not by one performer but by a team of ‘Marinas’. John McDonald in the Sydney Morning Herald, writing on the *13 Rooms* project, said Abramovic brought a new attitude to re-imaging or re-staging performances created by artists other than the original makers/performers. This was best demonstrated in her exhibition *Seven Easy Pieces* staged at the Guggenheim Museum, New York in 2005. ‘In this show Abramovic re-staged classic performances by Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys, Valie Export, Bruce Nauman, Gina Paine, and two of her own works. For the first time the works were treated as musical scores or theatrical events, able to be re-interpreted in slightly different ways.’

McDonald, J 2013, *13 Rooms*, on-line review, viewed 16 April 2013, <<http://johnmcdonald.net.au/2013/13-rooms/>>.

<sup>375</sup> Gooding, M 1990, *Bruce McLean*, Phaidon Press, London, p. 14.

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

In his 1961 essay for the exhibition *Environments, Situations, Spaces*, Oldenburg edged towards a manifesto which included this statement, 'I am for an art that embroils itself with everyday crap & still comes out on top.'<sup>377</sup>

From the outset, as I contemplated the possibilities of this research project I aimed to re-imagine an existing work as a performance – an idea that plays with the nature of capture. In this act I would not only be placing the work under an intense gaze as I captured and re-imagined the work of another artist, I would also be captured on camera in the act of re-imagining the work thereby creating a circularity connecting past and present. Initially I contemplated the Sophie Calle work *The Shadow*, 1981, a work in which the artist placed herself under the surveillance of a private detective hired by her mother. Sandra Phillips says of Calle's oeuvre that the artist has, '...used the camera to explore surveillance with tenacity and originality, and has made the inversion of public and private spaces her special territory...' <sup>378</sup> Calle's influence has at times, stimulated extraordinary responses.<sup>379</sup> As research progressed I harboured concerns about my ability to successfully re-imagine Calle's work without becoming self-conscious. I also gave consideration to re-imagining a work by Vito Acconci called *Following Piece*, 1969. Recall I discussed this work in section 3, chapter 1, in relation to the intervention I made in the studio of Christian Boltanski. Marta Gili writes in the *Exposed* catalogue of both Calle and Acconci saying:

...their photographs purposefully take on a journalistic quality, the recording of evidence that proves an event. The artistic value of the works is in the ability to reveal situations and contexts...capitalis[ing] on a certain form of journalism... <sup>380</sup>

In both works, *The Shadow* and *Following Piece* the photographs were taken by a third party – *the amenable eye* walked into position by a third party. Having moved from interviewer to performer in Christian Boltanski's studio and partly into the frame (as proof of my existence, at that moment, in that place) as I documented Boltanski's exhibited works in Paris, Venice and Sydney it seemed only a small step to move into the central role of performer once again. Having rediscovered the McLean/Buwalda *Mirror Work* images I knew intuitively that this was the appropriate work for my exploration of re-presentation. Intellectually the work aligned with my research, my interest in reflective surfaces and the ability of reflective surfaces to reveal

<sup>377</sup> Gooding, M 1990, *Bruce McLean*, Phaidon Press, London, UK, p. 14.

<sup>378</sup> Phillips, SS (ed.), Baker, S & Brookman, P et al 2010, *Exposed: voyeurism, surveillance and the camera*, exhibition catalogue, 28 May-3 October 2010, Tate Modern, London, UK, p. 144.

<sup>379</sup> In 2001 Vienna Del Rosario Parreno (1978- ) changed her name by deed poll to Sophie Calle and exhibited several re-presentations of Calle's work in her Honours graduation show at the College of Fine Arts, UNSW. Parreno's exhibition was called *V4 Vertigo + Doublegame Sophie Calle*, viewed 8 April 2014, <<http://www.findingvienna.net/index.php#mi=1&pt=0&pi=2&s=0&p=0&a=0&at=0>>.

<sup>380</sup> Gili, M, 'From Observation to Surveillance', in Phillips, SS (ed.), Baker, S & Brookman, P et al 2010, *Exposed: voyeurism, surveillance and the camera*, exhibition catalogue, 28 May-3 October 2010, Tate Modern, London, UK, p. 244.

what Philip Fisher describes as, ‘...accidental and extremely short-lived unique moments of beauty...’<sup>381</sup>



PLATE 42 IMAGES 95-96

Sophie Calle, *The Shadow*, 1981

Vito Acconci, *Following Piece*, 1969

Elaine Sturtevant (1930-2014) said in an interview with writer Peter Halley that intuition, ‘...is the fire that triggers the intellect.’<sup>382</sup> Sturtevant’s entire oeuvre has been the capture, representation and re-creation of works by artists who are known (and the more important and recognizable the artist the better). The interview with Halley was part of the monograph produced to support Sturtevant’s major exhibition, *The Razzle Dazzle of Thinking* at Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris in 2010. In her essay ‘Sturtevant’s Fake Mirages,’ for the same monograph, exhibition curator, Ann Dressen says:

It was in the 1960s that she [Sturtevant] decided to reproduce certain works by her contemporaries. Her paradoxical iconoclasm upset people. At the time the replica counted as an original sin...The dictatorship of originality – and even more so of singularity – had nonetheless been a myth of the Romantic era before becoming the symbol of the modernist breakaway...<sup>383</sup>

In the essay Dressen looks at whether the re-creation of a work can be exactly the same as the original or whether inevitable shifts or imperfections occur. Can the two works be ‘peas in a pod?’ Dressen asks, with a Deleuzian overlay. In essence she says ‘...two peas in a pod can’t be identical, and every reprise puts restrictions on hyperrealism because subjectivity inevitably creeps in...’<sup>384</sup> Dressen argues that Sturtevant would have us acknowledge, ‘... that every repetition is first and foremost a performance...’<sup>385</sup> If this is so then I contend, along

<sup>381</sup> Fisher, P 1998, *Wonder, the rainbow, and the aesthetics of rare experiences*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 25.

<sup>382</sup> Sturtevant, E, Dressen, A (ed.), Halley, P (interview), Hergott, F (director) 2010, *The razzle dazzle of thinking*, exhibition catalogue, 5 February-25 April 2010, Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France, JRP-Ringier, Zurich, CH, p. 269.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

with Sturtevant and Dressen, that no performance can be exactly the same as the one before or the one after. In 2008 Hans-Ulrich Obrist interviewed Sturtevant for the Berlin based magazine *O32c*. He asked about the issue of copyright and Sturtevant answered, ‘...it is not necessarily my issue... Firstly, a copy must be absolutely of the same intention as the original, whereas my work deals with interior movement, and repetition as difference...’<sup>386</sup> Obrist says ‘Repetition as difference’, has become Sturtevant’s mantra.<sup>387</sup> Perhaps one of Sturtevant’s most recognized appropriations is Andy Warhol’s *Flower* series made in 1964. Just as Warhol (1928–1987) appropriated a flower from a Kodak advertisement to make his famous flower series, so Sturtevant replicated Warhol’s flower series using the same silkscreen that Warhol had used – Warhol giving her the screen himself. In a subsequent interview, when Warhol was bombarded with questions about the process of making the *Flower* series, he is reputed to have shrugged and said ‘I don’t know, ask Elaine.’<sup>388</sup> Sturtevant is regarded as a thinker although not always easy to follow. An excerpt from a thought piece written by the artist in 2003 and reprinted in the monograph supporting the exhibition *The Razzle Dazzle of Thinking* follows.

Repetition:  
 Repetition is displaced difference.  
 Repetition is pushing the limits of resemblance.  
 Repetition is interior movement.  
 Repetition is jetting representation.  
 [...]  
 The Brutal Truth is that this work is not copy not only by  
 intention and meaning but also by interior structure.  
 To think copy in relation to the work is to render it impotent.  
 Today, of course, everything is double, copy, re-do, re-done, re-load.  
 [...]  
 With this paradoxical and antagonistic method of resemblance but not-in-  
 itself-resemblance, the source works are vigorously emptied and thus  
 are able to fulfil their role as catalyst.  
 The essential “insistent” murmur of resemblance”  
 And that of identity are there but transformed.<sup>389</sup>

While appropriating or re-presenting existing artworks enjoyed a degree of popularity in the 1970s it has also been controversial, and criticism of Sturtevant’s work was so intense in the US it caused her to stop making art for a decade before she moved to another country (France) where there was greater support for the idea. Today support for the idea is gaining in both popularity and significance across the world. At the time Sturtevant staged a solo exhibition, *Sturtevant: Leaps, Jumps and Bumps*, at the Serpentine Gallery in 2013 she was considered

<sup>386</sup> Obrist, HU 2008/2009, ‘Sturtevant’, *O32c*, issue #16, pp. 126–127.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid., pp. 126–127.

<sup>388</sup> Arning, B 1989, ‘Sturtevant’, *Journal of Contemporary Art*, vol. 2, no. 2, p. 43.

<sup>389</sup> Sturtevant, E 2003, ‘Modes of Thought Modes of Being’, in Sturtevant, E, Dressen, A (ed.), Halley, P (interview), Hergott, F (director) 2010, *The razzle dazzle of thinking*, exhibition catalogue, 5 February–25 April 2010, Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France, JRP-Ringier, Zurich, CH, pp. 69–71.



more important than ever.<sup>390</sup> Sadly Sturtevant passed away in May of 2014, five months before the opening of the first comprehensive survey of her works in the US, *Sturtevant: Double Trouble*, 9 November 2014–22 February 2015 at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. In a sense this major exhibition was to have been an, ‘all is forgiven’ gesture of recognition by her countrymen and women, a remarkable event for Sturtevant in her eighty-ninth year. While the artist would have been working on the exhibition her grand finale was not to be. In his obituary for Sturtevant Hans Ulrich Obrist says:

Recently there has been a massive resurgence of interest in her work in museums across the world, with shows at venues including the Deichtorhallen Hamburg (1992); the Museum für Modern Kunst, Frankfurt am Main (2004); the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2010); the Moderna Musset, Stockholm (2012); the Kunsthalle, Zurich (2012) and the Serpentine Gallery, London (2013). Her new popularity is easily explained: in the internet age there is greater understanding of her extraordinary creativity with borrowed imagery.<sup>391</sup>

In 1936 Walter Benjamin stated that:

In principle, the work of art has always been reproducible. What man has made, man has always been able to make again. Such copying was also done by pupils as an artistic exercise, by masters in order to give works wider circulation...<sup>392</sup>

Artworks that have endured, sometimes for centuries, remain under the continuous gaze of artists, scholars and students – who draw, paint, write about and reproduce them in an effort to understand the mind and ability of the master. In his catalogue essay for the Deakin University Art Gallery exhibition, *Face to Face*, Geoffrey Edwards, Director of the Geelong Art Gallery, addresses the practice of artists who have made and continue to make copies of artworks, particularly historical artworks, or create interpretations of artworks of previous generations. He writes, ‘...artists have long borrowed motifs from poems but they have more often copied other works of visual art and have done ever since the Romans first copied the master works of Greek sculpture.’<sup>393</sup> He goes on to list the many artists from Rembrandt to Van Gogh, Millet to Picasso who have made copies of existing artworks or artefacts. ‘In any case,’ he says:

artists of all generations and conceptual persuasions have *responded* in one sense or another to the works or prevailing styles and theories of a previous generation, taking those works or styles either as a springboard for their own investigations or as a basis for

<sup>390</sup> Disappointingly for a researcher who prefers to sight and experience artworks in the flesh I have not viewed a work by Sturtevant. My research travels in the last four years have not coincided with her major exhibitions in London and Paris and museums visited have not had individual works by Sturtevant on show.

<sup>391</sup> Obrist, HU 2014, ‘Elaine Sturtevant obituary: Artist who copied, repeated and reconstructed other artists’ works, starting with Andy Warhol’s *Flowers* in 1965’, *The Guardian*, 20 May 2014, viewed 12 November 2014, <<http://www.theguardian.com>>.

<sup>392</sup> Benjamin, W 1936, ‘The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction’, in Arendt, H (ed.), Zohn, H (translator) 1969, *Illuminations: essays and reflections*, Schocken, p. 3.

<sup>393</sup> Edwards, G 2012, ‘Perpetual adaptations’, *Face to face*, exhibition catalogue, 25 July to 1 September 2012, Deakin University Art Gallery, p. 8.

a concerted revision of method or approach...<sup>394</sup>

Edwards continues, ‘...whether ‘shocking’ or not [this process of perpetual revision] represents a vital moment in a cultural continuum...’<sup>395</sup> Benjamin said even, ‘...with the most perfect reproduction *one thing* stands out: the here and now of the work of art – its unique existence in the place where it is at this moment.’<sup>396</sup> Walter Benjamin died in 1940 and while his views remain relevant he could not have anticipated the explosion of approaches to reproduction and the methods of re-presentation that now exist.

It is my belief that the concept of a work of art that endures for many decades (or generations) is an idea that is gradually slipping away from us. Culturally in the western world, we have developed into an increasingly impatient spectatorial audience more accustomed to the reality that what burns brightly does so for only a short time. We are unaccustomed to artworks that endure because our desire, our voracious greed for the new, drives us ever onward to the next shiny object. In this context it therefore becomes relevant to look at, dissect and perhaps even recreate (re-present) the rare enduring works in an effort to try to understand their ‘strange’ significance, to see these works in a new light. Catherine Grenier in her book *The Possible Life of Christian Boltanski* questioned Boltanski about other artists coming close to or appropriating his work:

CG: And how do you react when other artists use the same vocabulary as you, but with different intent, as Ann Hamilton recently did at the Maison Rouge when she used hung clothing?

CB: I can’t say whether I would call that a copy; sometimes there are things that are similar but aren’t necessarily copies. But what’s bothersome in such cases is that it can prevent you from pursuing a work that you’d wanted to continue...One of the reasons I stopped using slightly worn black-and-white photos is that it’s become such a cliché.<sup>397</sup>

Writing of the American photographic appropriation artist Sherrie Levine (1947- ), Johanna Burton and Elizabeth Sussman made the claim that, ‘...Levine effectively rewrites history, taking up images and objects from earlier times and other places – whether by Constantin Brancusi, Marcel Duchamp, Walker Evans or Alfred Stieglitz...and placing them before contemporary audiences to be experienced anew.’<sup>398</sup> Levine’s approach to repetition is to collaborate with the original work, referring to the outcome as ‘almost new’. In creating the ‘almost new’

<sup>394</sup> Edwards, G 2012, ‘Perpetual adaptations’, *Face to face*, exhibition catalogue, 25 July to 1 September 2012, Deakin University Art Gallery, p. 9.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>396</sup> Benjamin, W, Underwood, JA (translation) 2008, *The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction* (1936), Penguin Books, London, p. 5.

<sup>397</sup> Grenier, C, Sante, L (foreword) 2009, *The possible life of Christian Boltanski*, MFA Publications, Boston, p. 205.

<sup>398</sup> Levine, S, Burton, J & Sussman, E et al 2012, *Mayhem*, exhibition catalogue, 10 November 2011 – 29 January 2012, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, US, p. 14.

Levine, '...makes a conceptual point about the contextualization and re-contextualization of imagery.'<sup>399</sup> Her challenge to the spectator is, '...that we question images, not simply consume them...'<sup>400</sup> Levine is perhaps best known for her exhibition *After Walker Evans: 1-22* (1981). The exhibition consisted of 'almost new' photographs taken from a catalogue of photographs by the iconic American photographer Walker Evans (1903-1975). Images Evans had taken between 1935 and 1938.<sup>401</sup> Just as Sturtevant prefers to 'collaborate' with the recognized works of well known artists, Levine was also working with images made by a known and revered photographer and this was considered an audacious approach. Johanna Burton wrote, '...a photograph of a photograph – as Levine's Evanses illuminate – is *not* a copy of the pre-existing image but, rather, a new object, however subtly distinct (in this case, carrying the traces of having been a photograph rendered as a bookplate and back again...)'<sup>402</sup> The Estate of Walker Evans was outraged, viewing Levine's approach as an infringement of copyright a problem that has not been resolved to this day. Levine was the subject of a major survey exhibition, *Sherrie Levine: Mayhem*, at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2012. In the exhibition Levine displayed a re-presentation of a famous Walker Evans photograph attributing copyright to the Walker Evans Estate. Levine does not own the copyright to 'her' work because she is still in dispute with the Estate.<sup>403</sup>

Jean Baudrillard in his book *The Conspiracy of Art* says:

Art has become quotation, reappropriation...But tangentially, everything is a quotation: everything is textualized in the past, everything has already existed. Yet this art of quotation, reappropriation, simultaneity, etc. is different. It plays on the fossilized irony of a culture that no longer believes in that value. In my opinion, the artistic world no longer believes deeply in the destiny of art.<sup>404</sup>

Re-presentation or appropriation is a complex and divisive area of art in a now litigious society. Baudrillard's comments and his core thesis that art has 'no more reason to exist',<sup>405</sup> first made in 1996, is also as divisive as the realm of appropriation itself. While interest may be increasing for museum exhibitions so are lawsuits taken out against artists. In her article, 'No longer appropriate?' for the US online newspaper, *The Art Newspaper*, journalist Laura Gilbert mentions Levine, Richard Prince and a number of other American artists currently engaged

<sup>399</sup> Brooks, R (introduction), in Prince, R, Brooks, R, Rian, J, Sante, L 2003, *Richard Prince*, Phaidon Press, New York, p. 35.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>401</sup> Levine, S, Burton, J & Sussman, E et al 2012, *Mayhem*, exhibition catalogue, 10 November 2011 – 29 January 2012, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, US, p. 19.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>403</sup> Gilbert, L 2012, 'No longer appropriate?' *The Art Newspaper*, issue 235, viewed 22 April 2014, <<http://www.theartnewspaper.com/articles/No-longer-appropriate/26378>>.

<sup>404</sup> Baudrillard, J, Lotringer, S (ed.), Hodges, A (translator) 2005, *The Conspiracy of Art*, Semiotext(e), Los Angeles, p. 55.

<sup>405</sup> Lotringer, S, in Baudrillard, J, Lotringer, S (ed.) Hodges, A (translator) 2005, *The Conspiracy of Art*, Semiotext(e), Los Angeles, p. 9.

in disputes or legal cases based on the appropriation of work. She also mentions Jeff Koons (1955- ), once a keen appropriation artist who no longer appropriates without permission. Gilbert quotes gallery owner Ronald Feldman who said of Andy Warhol, ‘...the young Andy... was caught using copyright material, but then started working with rights holders to secure licenses.’<sup>406</sup> Issues of copyright, moral rights and fair usage are extremely complex.

Generational repetition and the differences inherent in re-presented works can also transport us to the movies. Between 1994 and 1995 Pierre Huyghe (1962- ) created a remake of Alfred Hitchcock’s film, *Rear Window*, 1954, which he called *Remake*. To do this he used a team of non-professional performers who repeated the words and actions of the original film exactly.<sup>407</sup> Huyghe said in an interview with Barry Schwarby that, ‘...it’s very naïve to think that because you’re remaking something you’re not doing things differently...’<sup>408</sup>

As I was reflecting on the mirror qualities of generational repetition, re-presentation and appropriation, I received a catalogue from Philip Bacon Galleries in Brisbane for an exhibition by Michael Zavros (1974- ), *Michael Zavros: Charmer*, 29 October-23 November 2013. Zavros is a realist painter. I flipped through the catalogue and stopped abruptly at page ten. Here I saw a work that I recognized immediately as an image used in the now-famous *Marlboro Man* advertising campaign for Philip Morris (1954-1999). The work in this case was not a re-photographing of the original advertisement – that is not the oeuvre of Zavros – rather it was more closely aligned with Sturtevant’s meticulous approach to re-presentation. It was a watercolour titled *Prince/Zavros 12* (detail) 2011. The first iteration of this generational re-presentation of the *Marlboro Man* was made by the American painter and photographer Richard Prince (1949- ) and exhibited in 1989.<sup>409</sup> Michael Zavros, in titling his ‘new’ images Prince/Zavros, was acknowledging the existence of the generational repetition. Preceding both, and remaining unacknowledged, is the original photographer the respected National Geographic

<sup>406</sup> Gilbert, L 2012, ‘No longer appropriate?’ *The Art Newspaper*, issue 235, viewed 25 April 2014, <<http://www.theartnewspaper.com/articles/No-longer-appropriate/26378>>.

<sup>407</sup> Huyghe, P, ‘Pierre Huyghe – Remake’, in Levin, TY, Frohne, U & Weibel, P (eds) 2002, *CTRL [SPACE]: rhetorics of surveillance from Bentham to big brother*, exhibition catalogue, 12 October 2001-24 February 2002, ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany, pp. 282-283.

<sup>408</sup> Danino, N, & Mazière, M (eds) 2003, *The undercut reader: critical writings on artists, film and video*, Wallflower Press, London, p. 3.

<sup>409</sup> Brooks, R (introduction), in Prince, R, Brooks, R, Rian, J, Sante, L 2003, *Richard Prince*, Phaidon Press, New York, pp. 61-62.

‘The image of the cowboy, a rural mythic figure who symbolizes solitude and self-reliance...is a paradox. The fact that the cowboy was made redundant (indeed tabooed culturally) by the need to control the advertising of cigarettes for health reasons, was clearly of interest to Prince. And the association of disease with America’s own mythic self-image of innocence is fertile ground. The Arcadian image of American origination has been transformed into a forbidden image of terminal danger, contaminated by a cultural pollutant in the form of cigarettes. Here is another area of image control that Prince is able to subvert...by exploiting the seductive power that Marlboro was forced to abandon – the image of the lone cowboy riding through the wilderness – Prince creates an eschatological sense of cultural termination, the end of wilderness, and of the romantic image of the cowboy.’ Rosetta Brooks.



photographer, Sam Abell (1945- ). This quintessential image of the cowboy was photographed by Abell in the late 1970s-early 1980s, turned into a *Marlboro Man* advertisement, appropriated from the advertisement by Prince in 2003 and re-presented by Zavros in 2013. Talking to Mariam Arcilla of *Vault* magazine, and using the language of Sturtevant, Michael Zavros said:

Prince emptied the smoking campaign from the image of the American cowboy and I've emptied Prince from the rephotographed image. With the passage of time and the vanishing cigarette advertising, what we're left with are these incredibly beautiful, romantic images of the fictional Marlboro country.<sup>410</sup>



PLATE 43 IMAGES 97-98

Richard Prince, *Untitled (Cowboy)*, 2003, chromogenic print, 100.6 x 76cm

Original photograph Sam Abell, circa 1980

Michael Zavros, *Prince/Zavros 4*, 2012, charcoal on paper, 122 x 86cm

During a thirty-three year career with National Geographic Abell spent one and a half years on assignment creating a photo-story about the American cowboy artist Charles Marion West. During that time the photographer claims to have taken 25,000 photographs in his search for quintessential images of the Montana landscape and the working cowboy. Beyond the specific article for National Geographic, a selection of images was published in Abell's book titled *CM Russell's WEST* (1987)<sup>411</sup> and at least one photograph (possibly more) was made available to the advertising agency Leo Burnett. Leo Burnett created the *Marlboro Man* cigarette advertising

<sup>410</sup> Arcilla, M 2013, *Vault: new art & culture magazine*, issue 3, April 2013, viewed 13 September 2013, <[http://vaultart.com.au/backissues/issue\\_3.php](http://vaultart.com.au/backissues/issue_3.php)>.

<sup>411</sup> Clark, CM (ed.), Abell, S (photographer) & Renner, G (introduction) 1987, *CM Russell's west*, Thomasson-Grant Inc., Charlottesville.

campaign, a campaign that not only ran for forty-five years, it also became one of the most successful campaigns in advertising history, tapping into an emblematic dream of freedom and masculinity part of the mythology of the American west.<sup>412</sup> The success of the campaign created a moral and ethical dilemma for the cowboy and inflicted a tragic human toll on smokers. Abell was not the only *Marlboro Man* photographer. Ernst Haas (1921-1986), Dieter Blum (1936- ) and Hannes Schmid (1946- ), among others, also contributed to the legend and in the process their photographs were also appropriated by Prince. World focus fell on Prince when one of his re-photographed images was sold by Christie's New York, in 2005, for \$1.2 million.<sup>413</sup> *Untitled (Cowboy)*, 1989, was one of an edition of two with an artist's proof. This particular *Untitled (Cowboy)*, a title Prince used repeatedly, is held in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (purchased in 2000) and the Art Gallery of New South Wales holds an edition purchased in 2011 by the John Kaldor Family Collection. The photograph was also included in the Richard Prince retrospective that began its American tour at the Guggenheim in New York as *Spiritual America* in 2007 and travelled to the Serpentine Gallery, London in 2008 as *Richard Prince: Continuation*.

In the late 1970s Richard Prince worked at *Time* magazine. His task was to cut the editorial sections from magazine tear sheets sending the material to the authors. He encapsulates this time in a quote posted on the website of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles, (who hold in their collection *Untitled (Cowboy)*, 1980-1984):

I got a job in the tear-sheets department, ripping up magazines like *People*, *Fortune*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Time*, and delivering the editorial pages...I started looking at the ads very carefully...So I began to use a camera to make fake photographs of the ads. By re-photographing a magazine page and then developing the film in a cheap lab, the photos came out very strange. They looked like they could be my photographs but they weren't.<sup>414</sup>

In an interview in 2003 with Jeff Rian, Prince said that he decided to play with the left over pictures, all that remained of the tear sheets, treating the pictures like gallery images and calling them his. He referred to this process as, 'pirating', 'stealing' or 'sampling' the images. 'I figured nobody was going to like them...not the subject matter, much less the way they were produced...re-photographed.'<sup>415</sup> Prince went ahead with his plan to appropriate believing that this process was the opportunity he was looking for to advance his career.

<sup>412</sup> Connolly, K 2011, 'Six ads that changed the way you think', *BBC News*, (US & Canada), viewed 22 April 2014, <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-11963364>>.

Katie Connelly in her article listed The 'Marlboro Man' campaign in third place after *DeBeers*, 'A diamonds is forever,' and The *Volkswagen* campaign, 'Think small.'

<sup>413</sup> Christie's Auction Results 2005, Richard Prince, *Untitled Cowboy*, 1989, lot 1573, price realised, \$1.248.000, viewed 13 September 2014, <[http://www.christies.com/Lotfinder/lot\\_details.aspx?intObjectID=4597357](http://www.christies.com/Lotfinder/lot_details.aspx?intObjectID=4597357)>.

<sup>414</sup> Prince, R 2014, 'Collection: MOCA'S first thirty years', Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, viewed, 19 January, 2014, <[www.moca.org/prince](http://www.moca.org/prince)>.

<sup>415</sup> Prince, R in conversation with Rian, J, in Prince, R, Brooks, R, Rian, J, Sante, L 2003, *Richard Prince*, Phaidon Press, New York, pp. 11-12.



The actions of Prince echo those of Christian Boltanski who cut portraits of newborns or deceased citizens from Polish and Swiss newspapers, re-photographing them and then using and reusing the photographs over many years. For the work *Chance*, 2011- , Boltanski used re-photographed, photographs, of newborn babies from his archive of Polish images to create the roll of hundreds of faces. For *The Reserve of Dead Swiss*, 1990, purchased by the Tate Gallery, he used re-photographed images he had taken from Swiss newspapers. In both cases a new context was created for an existing image. As Didier Semin says if, ‘...Boltanski’s sources in his photography are clearly the press, sales catalogues and amateur photographs, the attention to these popular sources is itself a clearly identifiable influence of the age.’<sup>416</sup> In his process Richard Prince deleted the text of the *Marlboro Man* advertisement, the medical warning and the image of the cigarette packet, re-presenting the result in a gallery context. Of his action he says, ‘... there was definitely an ‘attitude’ involved in standing behind the camera looking at a tear sheet from a magazine and re-framing the image, then clicking and depressing the shutter, knowing that what would come out was pretty much what was ‘almost there’...I mean the picture wasn’t going to change.’<sup>417</sup> Since his days at *Time* magazine Prince has built a formidable career regularly exhibiting across America and internationally.

In a YouTube interview, ‘Photographer Sam Abell talks about Richard Prince,’ conducted on 14 June 2008 (coinciding with Prince’s retrospective *Spiritual America* which by then had toured from the Guggenheim in New York to the Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis, Minnesota) the photographer refers to the actions of Prince in re-photographing his photographs as plagiarism although he also says that the action is technically legal.<sup>418</sup> Clearly not happy about the re-presentation and the subsequent sale of ‘his’ work for such a high price Abell tries to remain balanced and accepting. He acknowledges the image has been shown in galleries that he would never have been able to access because of what he sees as the negative attitude of the art establishment toward editorial [documentary] photography. Abell says that his image

<sup>416</sup> Semin, D, Garb, T & Kuspit, D 1997, *Christian Boltanski*, Phaidon Press Limited, New York, p. 72.

<sup>417</sup> Prince, R in conversation with Rian, J, in Prince, R, Brooks, R, Rian, J, Sante, L 2003, *Richard Prince*, Phaidon Press, New York, p. 13.

<sup>418</sup> French Photographer Patrick Cariou took Prince, Gagosian Gallery and Rizzoli publishers to court over copyright infringement of images taken from his book *Yes, Rasta* published in 2000. The images appropriated by Prince were exhibited at Gagosian Gallery in *Canal Zone*, 2008 and also appeared in a catalogue published by Rizzoli. Cariou brought the copyright infringement suit against Prince, Gagosian Gallery and Rizzoli in 2009 and in 2011 a US District Court Judge (Deborah Batts) found against the defendants ordering catalogues and unsold paintings to be destroyed and works that had sold (in some cases for as much as \$10m) could no longer be legally displayed in public. Prince, Gagosian Gallery and Rizzoli appealed the decision on the basis of fair use and the fact that fair use allows for ‘transformative’ uses. In April 2013 the Appeal Court found in favour of Prince. At the time Abell made his comments he could not have imagined such an outcome. Coincidentally the ruling came down shortly before the opening of Sturtevant’s major exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery, 28 June 2013.

Boucher, B 2013, ‘News’, *Art in America*, viewed 14 November 2014, <<http://www.artinamericamagazine.com/.../landmark-copyright-lawsuit-cariou-v-...>>.



effortless – that is not the choice the artist is making. Any decision to re-present a work by another artist will inevitably invite criticism and in the case of Prince, law suits. The considered choice the artist is making is to look anew at existing work through the lens of a different time, and a different moment. A decade ago Marina Abramovic made a contribution to shifting or softening established, often negative, attitudes to the re-presentation of artworks, particularly works of a performative or interventionist nature. In 2005 she staged *Seven Easy Pieces* at the Guggenheim Museum, New York. Art critic for the Sydney Morning Herald, John McDonald says of this exhibition, ‘...Abramovic restaged classic performances by Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys, Valie Export, Bruce Nauman, Gina Paine, and two of her own works. For the first time works of performers were treated like musical scores or theatrical events, able to be reinterpreted in slightly different ways.’<sup>423</sup> McDonald was writing on the Kaldor Public Art Projects event, *13 Rooms*, 2013, itself a re-imagining. *13 Rooms* was originally conceived by Klaus Biesenbach and Hans-Ulrich Obrist for the Manchester International Festival, 2011, as *11 Rooms*, and re-staged in Essen, Germany, as part of an event called Ruhrtriennale before coming to Australia as *13 Rooms*. The notion of re-imagining works, ‘like musical scores’ returns us to Christian Boltanski’s comment in section 3, chapter 2, ‘I consider what I do to be like a musical score, and anyone can play it. But each time it’s played, it means something different.’<sup>424</sup> As he discussed with Catherine Grenier, Boltanski would prefer that his works remained active. ‘What I’d like is that, after I’m gone people would reinstall my works in relation to the spaces, and sign them along with me. The way Sol LeWitt anticipated...’<sup>425</sup>

It was in the spirit of play, renewing and sharing that I determined to re-present Bruce McLean’s, *Mirror Work*. In doing so I was acknowledging work created half a century ago, work that has endured perhaps because of the magical quality of the reflected image and the simplicity of the idea. A human figure within the landscape – a figure used as an armature. The figure as armature is a pose, a simple performative act. In *Mirror Work* the figure as armature is holding an *innocent eye* to the world and in that moment the eye glances, slithering across the scene, gathering imagery. The spectator looks at the mirror and the mirror looks back. Roger Scruton says:

When I see someone in a mirror I see *him*, not his representation. This remains so even if the mirror is a distorting mirror and even if the mirror is placed where it is intentionally. This intention might even be similar to the intention in photography: to give a unique and remarkable view of an object, a view which reveals a ‘truth’ about it that might otherwise have gone unobserved. One could even imagine an art of mirrors, an art which involves holding a mirror aloft in such a way that what is seen in the mirror is rendered by that process interesting or beautiful.<sup>426</sup>

<sup>423</sup> McDonald, J 2013, ‘Too close for comfort’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, viewed 13 April 2013, <<http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/too-close-for-comfort-20130411-2hmdr.html>>.

<sup>424</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 12 October.

<sup>425</sup> Grenier, C, Sante, L (foreword) 2009, *The possible life of Christian Boltanski*, MFA Publications, Boston, p. 205.

<sup>426</sup> Scruton, R 1981, ‘Photography and representation’, *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 7, no. 3, University of Chicago Press, p. 595.

With all re-presentations there is slippage and change that reminds one of Sturtevant's mantra: 'repetition as difference.'<sup>427</sup> It is barely possible to replicate exactly what has gone before no matter how hard one might try. In this regard, perhaps because Zavros works in a hyper-realistic style, which in turn mirrors a high-resolution photograph, he is particularly effective. In my scenario the figure in the landscape would be different in all aspects, including gender, and the sites would be Tasmanian rather than British. My re-presentation could not be the result of a fun and opportunistic foray into a park like Barnes Common instead it must be completed as part of an intellectual exploration of the beauty and timelessness of the original images. McLean and Buwalda chose an accessible public park rather than a botanical setting or a manicured private garden and my search for a site would emulate that. The site had to be everyday, a place everyman(woman) could access.

Initially I considered re-imagining the work as a moving image piece in which I would walk into frame in a chosen site, stand for a fixed period of time, and then walk out of the frame. From the beginning there was slippage. And the images would be colour rather than the black and white of the originals. This was a conscious decision to clarify the generational nature of the work, emphasising the passage of time 1969 to 2013. If the work was to be a moving image piece then the weight of the mirror was a consideration. Alternative materials were investigated and eventually the conventional mirror was discarded for a sheet of mirror finish stainless steel. The metal mirror would be lighter and it also introduced the opportunity for chance occurrences in the form of distortions caused by the slightest breeze or my own breathing and body vibration. These imperfections alter the reflection, providing a further dimension to the image. As I researched various parks, the notion of a moving image work and the act of walking in and out of the frame was discarded because the most successful sites offered no opportunity for walking. The plants and trees of these chosen sites instead 'inviting' the performer to stand within their more secretive and shadowy paths and clearings. The decision was made to create a suite of three colour photographs utilising the arboreal characteristics of three different sites. The camera to be walked into position by a third party was a digital SLR (Olympus E3 using a Zuiko 14-54mm lens) while all preparatory work, site research and rehearsal, would be recorded on my iPhone by a third party. This re-imagining would be based on a gathering of sites rather than one site and a gathering or harvesting of chance reflections and strange worlds reflected in the mirror. The three images were achieved in two photographic shoots – Fitzroy Gardens (2.00pm) and St David's Park (4.00pm), 2 June 2013, and Crown Land at Opossum Bay (12.00pm), 16 June 2013.

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<sup>427</sup> Obrist, HU 2008/2009, 'Sturtevant', *O32c*, issue #16, pp. 126-134.



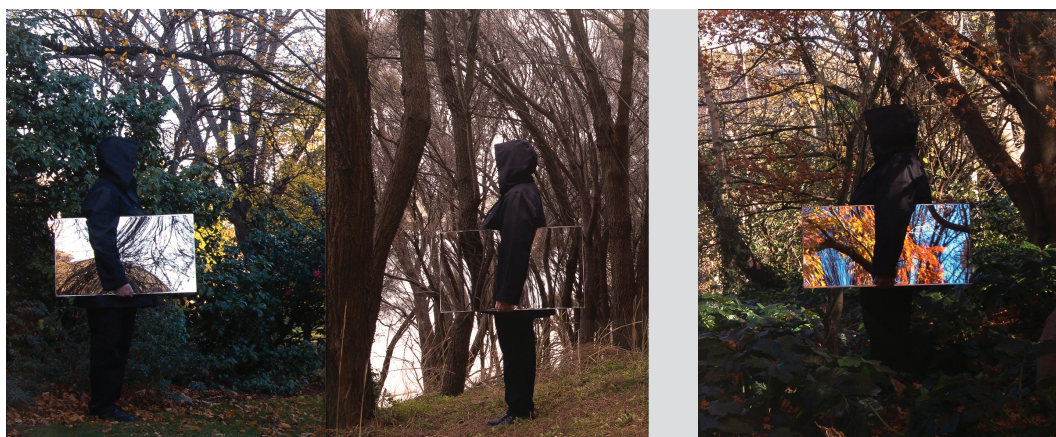


PLATE 45 IMAGES 102-104

Greer Honeywill, *Reflections (after Bruce McLean)* #1-#3, 2013

Pigment prints, 100 x75cm

Photographer Peter Angus Robinson

The works were exhibited in *Investigations* at the Plimsoll Gallery, Tasmanian College of the Arts in 2013. In the making of this work, *Reflections (after Bruce McLean)*, 2013, my focus was drawn to a particular work from another time, and in the process the camera and its mirror lens reflected my struggle to create the new or ‘nearly new’ while respecting the past. In the process I could ‘hear’ Sturtevant’s mantra, ‘repetition as difference’, ‘repetition is difference.’ Repetition is also a form of renewing. Janus-like, I look back in order to look forward, the mirror becoming a portal to other worlds. As Mel Gooding says of the Bruce McLean images, the ‘...artist holds up a mirror to the world a lens through which is refracted a reality that is concealed from our everyday perception...’<sup>428</sup> It is the apparent contradiction between what is read as the landscape in which the figure is placed and the reflection captured in the mirror that challenges the viewer. As Roger Scruton has said the mirror gives, ‘a unique and remarkable view.’<sup>429</sup> The dualities are of the everyday and, like the sudden experience of wonder, have the potential to create unexpected thresholds for the spectator and the maker, especially when the maker is cast within the living contradiction. As Casey says:

...the world is seen anew in the twinkling of an eye, and in the intense illumination of this epiphanic moment the seeing subject is also renewed. One transformation not only calls for the other actively but induces it – immediately without delay. Both transformations occur at the same time: in the moment of the glance that is enacted with absolute speed...<sup>430</sup>

Artist and academic, Lucas Ihlein (1979- ) has, as part of the expanded cinema community,

<sup>428</sup> Gooding, M, Furlong, W (interviews) 2002, *Song of the earth*, Thames and Hudson, London, p. 6.

<sup>429</sup> Scruton, R 1981, ‘Photography and representation’, *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 7, no. 3, University of Chicago Press, p. 595.

<sup>430</sup> Casey, ES 2007, *The world at a glance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p. 465.

re-presented works in a generational manner. In an interview I conducted with him for this research he was particularly interested in the reasons why I had chosen the Bruce McLean work. ‘What was it about the work,’ he asked, ‘...that ‘demanded’ that it had to be further studied?’ In his own work he said he searches for the gap, ‘...between the seeming simplicity of its [the work selected] ingredients and its method of execution...So you do these really simple things but you end up with this completely magical, bizarre result that is befuddling and beguiling and draws you in.’<sup>431</sup>

While there are practical methods and procedures that can be catalogued for any given project there is also the realm of intuition, of the senses, of physical and intuitive relationship to environments that can barely be articulated. It is this unspoken realm that also gives life to a work. As Heidegger (after Plato) said, the ‘The ‘doctrine’ of a thinker is that which, within what is said, remains unsaid.’<sup>432</sup>

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<sup>431</sup> Ihlein, L 2014, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 5 February.

<sup>432</sup> Heidegger, M, McNeill, W (ed.), Sheehan, T (translation) 1998, ‘Plato’s doctrine of truth’, *Pathmarks*, University Press, Cambridge, p. 155.



# 04

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## 03 Glass and Mirrors

In the street life of the city, people are to each other surfaces; every stroller moves through a constant display of surfaces, and every stroller is constantly on display as s/he moves.

– ZYGMUNT BAUMAN<sup>433</sup>

In this chapter I shift focus returning to ideas expressed in section 2 where I discuss wonder, reflection and the innocent eye. Thoughts return to the tiny mirror glass toy (*my innocent eye*) that stimulated wonder and led to the discovery of a magical miniature world within the landscape of the domestic garden. Glassy reflections and the echoing return of the gaze are elements that have been harnessed by artists to create works that resonate with a broad spectatorial audience. Works by Gerhard Richter, Daniel Buren and Ai Weiwei (with Herzog & de Meuron), as has been shown, entice the spectator to capture and prolong the moment using their *ever present eye* as the initial and perhaps singular reaction to the work. In this chapter I juxtapose the works of artists such as Dan Graham (1942- ) and Leandro Erlich (1973- ) with the reflective nature of the modern city that has exerted a major influence on the artists. The walker within these works is not so much the artist, rather it is the spectator who accepts the ‘invitation’ to play and interact with the works. Also discussed is a smaller reflective work that brings together all of the themes within this research project – wonder, reflection, walking and replication, in a manner that reaffirms the joy to be found in moments of the everyday lived experience.

In the sixties the American artist, writer and curator Dan Graham was using his Kodak Instamatic camera to document local domestic architecture. As he experimented with images he was also developing an interest in architecture that equalled his interest in art. Beatriz Colomina believes that, ‘Graham’s work parallels the evolution of modern architecture.’<sup>434</sup> Graham himself commented on this shift in focus in an interview with London-based curator

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<sup>433</sup> Bauman, Z 1995, *Life in Fragments: essays in postmodern morality*, Blackwell, Oxford, p. 134.

<sup>434</sup> Pelzer, B, Francis, M & Colomina, B 2001, *Dan Graham*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, p. 88.

Mark Francis saying in, ‘...the 60s I liked architecture because I wanted to make art that was hybrid, on the edge between two disciplines.’<sup>435</sup> He began making architectural models on an ever-increasing scale and complexity with reflections, mirrors and windows that emulated the glass curtain walls of high-rise city buildings and the expansive picture windows of the suburbs envisaged by Frank Lloyd Wright. Graham says:

My interest in video installation was in using, for example, a mirror, a window and instant time, everything having a fixed point of view. I was interested in the just-past rather than the instantaneous; in frozen time, where the subjective, perceptual process would be part of the way the work functions. Spectators can see themselves seeing and being seen by other people...For example, in *Video Piece for Two Glass Buildings* (1976) you could see spectators looking at themselves as seen in a mirror, being looked at by other people in adjacent glass buildings.<sup>436</sup>

After viewing examples of Minimalist public sculptures the artist began to wonder about making forms that were accessible from both inside and out. ‘So I thought of the pleasure pavilions of the Baroque and post-Baroque period,’ Graham said, and this was the genesis of his glass pavilions.<sup>437</sup> In her survey of Graham’s complex career in which the glass pavilion has become central to his oeuvre, Birgit Pelzer for the book *Dan Graham* writes:

Graham is activating and varying elements in a long chain of associations around the pavilion: the Greek myth of Arcadia, the refuge, the country garden with its origins in ancient cemeteries, baroque and rococo pavilions, Marc-Antoine Laugier’s primitive hut and Jean Jacques Rousseau’s concept of return to nature, allegories of the English garden, the nineteenth-century belvedere, temporary pavilions constructed for the world exhibitions, De Stijl buildings, urban parks and bus shelters...Graham’s pavilions give substance to the paradox of the modernist myth of transparency: that glass hides as much as it reveals.<sup>438</sup>

In 1991 Graham’s Rooftop Urban Park project opened. Titled *Two-way Mirror Cylinder Inside Cube and Video Salon*, 1991-2004, the work was sited on the rooftop of the Dia Center for the Arts, Chelsea, New York. The site-specific work, in collaboration with architects Mojdeh Baratloo and Clifton Balch, was commissioned by Dia and acquired by the Foundation in 1997. It was fortunate for me that the installed work was still in place in the year 2000 allowing me to experience it during a visit to New York. Curator of Dia at the time, Lynne Cooke wrote:

The atrium or lobby in the contemporary hotel, corporate headquarters, and even the modern museum typically posits an arcadian vista, which shields the inhabitant from the urban anomie or decay outside. But, whereas these utopian arcadia are technological harbours, places for retreat and relaxation as much as social exchange, Graham’s, by contrast, is utterly responsive to the natural world, its powers of reflectivity determined

<sup>435</sup> Pelzer, B, Francis, M & Colomina, B 2001, *Dan Graham*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, p. 14.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>438</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

by the motion of clouds and sun rather than artifice.<sup>439</sup>

*Two-way Mirror Cylinder Inside Cube and Video Salon* consisted of a square form, a glass-walled perimeter open to the elements. This form, Cooke said, makes reference to, ‘...the city below: to the grid pattern, which determines its topography; to the predominance of modernist architectural styles of high-rise architecture; and to its framing of the dual character of urban social experience, of seeing and being seen, of spectatorship and spectacle.’<sup>440</sup> Inserted into the ‘cube’ was a cylinder of glass and steel which, Cooke maintained, metaphorically referenced the body of the spectator while also literally referencing the adjacent water tower, ‘a ubiquitous feature of the Manhattan skyline.’<sup>441</sup> The siting of the work enabled spectators to look out across the Hudson, across the city and at the same time to look in at the spectators within the work who were looking out at them. Depending on the time of day and intensity of the light the inner gaze and the outer gaze were cloaked in reflective echoes and cloud patterns.

The experience of the spectator is important to Graham. Many of Graham’s pavilions have been constructed in museums, where there has often been a video component to the work creating a layered environment for the spectator. However, Graham has maintained a particular interest in the placement of the glass pavilion in the landscape where the work can harvest the largesse of the sun and the movement of clouds as well as the movement and reflections of the spectators and peripheral local movement. Graham says:

When two-way mirror glass is used in office buildings it’s always a mirror for the people on the outside, and transparent for the people on the inside. That’s the surveillance aspect...My pavilions are always a kind of two-way mirror, which is both transparent and reflective simultaneously...people on the inside and the outside have views of each other superimposed, as each gazes at the other and at the material. It’s intersubjective.<sup>442</sup>

The artist is aware that the placement of his pavilions in public space changes the composition of his spectatorial following. Removed from the museum and its legion of art educated spectators the pavilion in public space becomes a site for everyman(woman) and child. ‘My work is for children and parents on weekends,’<sup>443</sup> Graham said in 2001 and Lynne Cooke agreed saying, ‘...such architecture is public rather than private, and is involved with leisure and display, and with meditation as well as social interaction.’<sup>444</sup> In that public play between the layers of reflections what beauty exists, what involving ambiguity, what allure and perhaps

<sup>439</sup> Graham, D, Cooke, L (curator) 1997, *Two-way mirror cylinder inside cube and video salon*, pamphlet, Dia Center for the arts, New York, n.p.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid., n.p.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid., n.p.

<sup>442</sup> Pelzer, B, Francis, M & Colomina, B 2001, *Dan Graham*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, p. 21.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>444</sup> Graham, D, Cooke, L (curator) 1997, *Two-way mirror cylinder inside cube and video salon*, pamphlet, Dia Center for the arts, New York, n.p.

a tint of anxiety.

In 2004, Graham reflected on *Two-way Mirror Cylinder Inside Cube and Video Salon* in his catalogue comments for the exhibition of a new glass pavilion titled, *Half Square/Half Crazy* on the plaza at Borgovico 33, Como, Italy. The Dia installation has become a seminal work and as time goes by Graham seeks to place and re-place the work in a wider context:

My aim was to turn the Dia space into a city park/playground as well as outdoor multi-purpose ICA-London-type space. The work is an open-air, rooftop park, performance space, and coffee bar/videotheque. I elected not to cover the existing air-conditioner unit and made use of a storage space on the roof – turning it into a videotheque and coffee bar as in the 1980s atriums. The central pavilion was designed to work as a performance area and the videotheque was designed as an archive to revive 1970s concerns with video as media. I organized a program at Dia to purchase and screen an archive of videos selected by guest curators in the areas of architecture, cartoons, music and performance.<sup>445</sup>

For more than four decades Graham has created glass pavilions across the world enchanting, perplexing and reflecting on the voyeuristic nature of design in our cities. The pavilions perfectly illuminate his desire to create work that is neither sculpture nor architecture, instead creating hybrid forms occupying the edge between the two disciplines. Happy in their work his audiences extend the moment capturing image after image with their *ever present eye* trying to find the essence, that perfect repetition of reflections, the moment when they are trapped inside the many layers of reflection, or that soft cloudy mantle that melds magically with the body. There is no completion without the performers.



PLATE 46 IMAGES 105-107

Dan Graham, *Two-way Mirror Cylinder Inside Cube*, 1991-2004, detail

Mirrored glass, stainless steel, wood, Dia Center, New York

Photographer unknown, Dia Center, New York, 2000

Dan Graham, *Bisected Triangle Interior Curve*, 2002, detail

Two-way mirror glass and stainless steel, Inohtim Installation Park, Brumadinho, Brazil

Dan Graham, *Hedge Two-way Mirror Walkabout* (with Günther Vogt) 2014, detail

Photograph Fred R. Conrad, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, roof garden

We are always being watched even if only by innocent reflective surfaces which allow others to

<sup>445</sup> Graham, D 2004, *Half square/half crazy*, exhibition catalogue, 17 July-31 October 2004, Borgovico 33, Como, Italy, p. 57.

see us in an unguarded moment. I remember vividly, and embarrassingly, that on one occasion I spoke to a reflection in the glass wall of a department store. It took a surprising number of seconds to realize, as I moved closer and closer to the mirror that the *other* looking back, was not someone familiar whose name I was searching for, it was myself. On another occasion I walked into a lift with mirror glass lining and nodded respectfully to the other asking how they were. There was nobody there. I was alone, talking to myself. How is it that we may not always recognize ourselves, or differentiate between the ambiguity of the real and the reflected? Casey talking of mirror reflection says:

The mirror-glance exemplifies an instantaneous redoubling whereby in one present moment of my experience I immediately and forthwith spawn a virtual image of myself. This image, as seen by myself in the mirror, is the very image of my present looking...<sup>446</sup>

This ambiguity is the territory that Argentinian artist Leandro Erlich exploits. Influenced, the artist says, by the mirror fascination of his literary countryman Jorge Luis Borges. So fearful of mirrors was Borges that he claimed in an interview in 1983 that:

If a mirror hangs in a room I can no longer be alone there someone else is present. God created the forms of the mirror to show man that he is but a reflection that all is vanity. This is why mirrors frighten us.<sup>447</sup>

Erlich, however, is not fearful of mirror images. He sees the reflective surface as a material rich in ambiguity, an instrument of play and a means of visual manipulation. In 2001, at the age of twenty-eight, Erlich represented Argentina at the Venice Biennale creating *Swimming Pool*, 1999, a full-size a *trompe l'oeil* swimming pool that invited audience participation. Erlich created an up/down discontinuity. Looking up to the light and the spectators looking down from the edge of the pool through a film of water across a sheet of plexiglass or alternatively looking down from the edge of the pool through the water to the people moving and breathing below. *Swimming Pool* was re-created for MoMA PS1 in 2008 as a long-term installation and again in 2011 at GoMA, Queensland as part of *21<sup>st</sup> Century: Art in the First Decade*. Erlich is also the creator of huge mirror works that become uncanny, carnivalesque playgrounds for the spectator. Nothing in Erlich's massive reflections is real and yet everything is everyday, recognizable. The works are interactive – a designed landscape to be traversed by the spectator in the quest to create play of a reciprocal, fictional, nature. Like a mute stage set the work awaits the performers to bring it to life. When the spectator leaves, only the questioning reflection remains hanging, in this case, from an overpass, the mirror fabric vibrating to the rhythm of the elevated traffic.

<sup>446</sup> Casey, ES 2007, *The world at a glance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p. 283.

<sup>447</sup> *Profile of a writer: Borges and I*, 1983, film, Arena (BBC Four). Director David Wheatley, viewed 15 November 2013, <[http://www.ubuweb.com/film/borges\\_portrait.html](http://www.ubuweb.com/film/borges_portrait.html)>.

On an unusually dull Sydney day in January 2014 I visited Erlich's mirror work created for the Sydney Festival. The giant mirror of *Merchant's Store* reflected the nineteenth century façade of a building typical of the early sandstone built form of Sydney. On this stage I played my part as performer, easily outstripped by the virtuoso performances of very young children. *Merchant's Store* incorporated a mirror three stories in height, angled at forty degrees to the ground and on this occasion it was suspended from a railway overpass. In Erlich's works the mirror acts as a screen on which the spectator will appear performing a fiction, an optical illusion, a moment of life lived that it completely upended. On the ground lies a faithful reproduction of the façade of a building that in reality exists just around the corner, a building recognizable as part of the built environment of the city. With each presentation the artist selects a 'new' local building, accurately re-creating the façade as a stage upon which the players strut their stuff. The entire undertaking is cinematic. Erlich maintains a deep affection for the cinema and directors such as Alfred Hitchcock, Roman Polanski, Luis Buñuel and David Lynch, all of whom subvert the everyday to create psychological challenges.

This is art that captures the imagination of the crowd, happy to queue in return for a moment in the spotlight. The very young, the sophisticated, the aged and the undecided, all respond to the 'call' of the mirror, creating an on-site atmosphere reminiscent of a sideshow alley where the spectator is both the performer and the amusement. Those who do not want to perform take images of others who do. And it is both intriguing and amusing to watch spectators respond to the spatial challenge. What one observes is a place of carefree fun and cooperation, a moment dislodged from the continuum, where perception is challenged. The spectator is 'asked' to work and the reward is pleasure. By disrupting the fabric of the everyday, Erlich seeks to create the extraordinary and this work succeeds. The cameras of the spectators, work overtime to capture the moment, to keep the idea of the experience close. As Dan Graham said of his pavilions, 'I see them as photo opportunities for parents and children,' and the same can be said of Erlich's works.<sup>448</sup> Pertinent to these works are questions raised by Francesco Stocchi<sup>449</sup> in his essay, *At Hand*, about the works exhibited in Christian Capurro's exhibition *SLAVE*, at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art in 2014. 'If art is no longer merely about contemplation,' he asks, '...where does the work begin and end...? Does art survive the absence of the beholder?'<sup>450</sup> The works of Graham and Erlich are inclusive but they are also needy, they need the beholder to animate the installation in order to reveal the potential of the work, just as a stage set requires the actors. Like The Hall of Mirrors in the old sideshow alleys, the mirror remained passive until the spectator moved into the frame to become a distorted

<sup>448</sup> Pelzer, B, Francis, M & Colomina, B 2001, *Dan Graham*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, p. 21.

<sup>449</sup> Francesco Stocchi is the curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

<sup>450</sup> Stocchi, F, 'At hand', in Capurro, C, 2014, *Christian Capurro: SLAVE*, exhibition catalogue, 16 August-28 September 2014, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, AUS, n.p.



figure of fun. Both Erlich and Graham grasp the fact that the intellectual gravitas of art can still encompass humour and fun for the spectator.



PLATE 47 IMAGES 108-109

Leandro Erlich, *Merchant's Store*, 2014, Commissioned for the Sydney Festival, 2014

iPhone image Greer Honeywill

Leandro Erlich, *Dalston House*, 2013, Commissioned for the London Festival of Architecture 2013

Photograph Gar Powell-Evans

As the spectator encounters reflections in the works of Erlich and Graham and the works discussed in section 2, chapter 2, by Gerhard Richter, Daniel Buren, and Ai WeiWei with Herzog and de Meuron, they are rewarded with moments that astonish. These moments are akin to wonder, uncertain moments, destabilizing moments that invite the spectator to look at the world in a different way. Recall Jeff Malpas saying the experience of the momentary dislocation caused by the sudden experience of wonder is followed by, '...a returning...to the world to which we already belong...' <sup>451</sup> Wonder is 'destabilising', it 'messes things up', 'establishes a new order,' <sup>452</sup> as it did for Ben Nicholson who declared he wanted to live between the layers of reflections encountered in a French shop front window. <sup>453</sup> Elkins says to '...see is

<sup>451</sup> Malpas, J 2012, *Heidegger and the thinking of place: explorations in the topology of being*, MIT Press, Cambridge, p. 266.

<sup>452</sup> Malpas, J 2013, informal conversation with Greer Honeywill, 20 February.

<sup>453</sup> Lewison, J 1991, *Ben Nicholson*, Phaidon Press, Oxford, p. 13.

to be seen, and everything I see is like an eye, collecting my gaze, blinking and staring, focusing and reflecting, sending my look back to me.<sup>454</sup>

The work I am about to discuss is human scale, deceptively simple and yet remains a magical idea that links to all of the ideas explored in this section and other chapters. It was Lucas Ihlein's presentation to an Art Forum in Hobart in 2012 that first brought *Man With Mirror*, 1976 to life.<sup>455</sup> The work was originally created and performed by British artist Guy Sherwin (1948-) as a piece of Expanded Cinema<sup>456</sup> and re-staged by Sherwin in 2006 and beyond. With the agreement of Sherwin, Louise Curham and Lucas Ihlein collaborated to re-present the work as *(Wo)man With Mirror*, 2009. As I prepared to interview Lucas Ihlein about this new generation of the work<sup>457</sup> he suggested I make contact with his collaborator. It was not possible to interview Curham in person at that time and we therefore chose a written Q&A format as a way of capturing both points of view at more or less the same time.<sup>458</sup> Ihlein described *Man With Mirror* for RealTime magazine in 2005:

Some exquisite works, sadly, will go to the grave with the artist, and cannot be re-enacted by other artists or archivists. For me, one of the more poignant works in this category is *Man With Mirror* by Guy Sherwin. In this piece the artist, standing in the beam of a Super 8 projector, holds and tilts a square mirror painted white on the reverse. The mirror/screen reflects back into the room, or catches and reveals the Super 8 footage shot in 1976 showing Sherwin tilting an identical mirror/screen outdoors. As the film is projected, the live performer attempts to 'mirror' his own earlier movements, with confounding results. Which is the real Guy Sherwin, which is the projected image?<sup>459</sup>

<sup>454</sup> Elkins, J 1998, *The object stares back*, Harvest edition published by arrangement with Simon & Schuster, New York, p. 51.

<sup>455</sup> Sherwin, G 2011, *Man with mirror*, viewed 17 May 2014, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DX1-xuCNieg>>.

<sup>456</sup> Ihlein, L 2014, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 5 February.

On Expanded Cinema Ihlein said '...experimental film involves playing around with what goes on inside the frame of the celluloid film or the video frame while Expanded Cinema takes that idea but also incorporates the screening event and the architectural space where the film event is actually taking place and the social situation of the screening itself. It brings those things into the frame...it's never been a formalised movement as such, but there were people in the late 60s and early 70s doing what was called Expanded Cinema in Germany, Austria, England, America and Japan and probably other places but they are the main ones. And how it manifested itself in those different countries – was quite diverse. In America it was perhaps a bit more about psychedelic light shows and multiscreen projections that were more a part of the ambient setting of a party environment. But there were also people like Stan Vanderbeek who used Expanded Cinema events as...a prototype of what he hoped an internet culture would be. Where there were many different screens all operating at once in a kind of environment where you as the viewer were actively selecting what to look at rather than a single screen. Whereas the culture of the London Film-makers Co-operative came much more from structuralist, materialist film which was about drawing attention to the apparatus of film both the mechanical apparatus and the social and cultural apparatus, those forces that shape how we see the world through the technology of film and in an iconoclastic debunking of the spectacle of the cinema. A lot of the works from the London Film-makers Co-operative do draw attention to the projector, do draw attention to the celluloid film itself in a kind of quite thoughtful way rather than taking those things for granted and using them to create a spectacle.'

<sup>457</sup> A transcript of the interview can be found in the appendix.

<sup>458</sup> Louise Curham's responses to the Q & A can be found in the appendix.

<sup>459</sup> Ihlein, L 2005, 'Pre-digital new media art', *RealTime magazine*, issue #66, p. 26, viewed 3 February 2014, <<http://www.realtimearts.net/article/issue66/7779>>.



PLATE 48 IMAGES 110-111

Guy Sherwin, *Man With Mirror*, 1976-2011, stills from live performances  
*S(8) Film Festival* 3 June 2011, A Coruna, Spain and  
 16 September 2011, Siobhan Davies Studios, London

It was a shared interest in Super 8 film, Expanded Cinema, re-presentation, and the sharing of knowledge at both an educative and practice level that brought Ihlein and Curham together in 2003. Both are committed to the discovery, process and archiving of Expanded Cinema works from the sixties and seventies. Expanded Cinema works are essentially ephemeral, difficult to archive safely, and works of the past were often not well documented or not documented at all. In a joint statement Ihlein and Curham say, ‘...as artists, we have discovered that direct access to the work of our aesthetic precursors is essential for understanding and building upon the work of the past.’<sup>460</sup> Ihlein in the interview with *RealTime* magazine made the comment that they had both ‘...been experimenting with unauthorized re-enactments of various pieces of Expanded Cinema...at Sydney Moving Image Coalition (SMIC) events [Curham was one of the founders of the SMIC in 2000, now known as Teaching and Learning Cinema].’<sup>461</sup> While Curham and Ihlein acknowledged their early attempts at re-presentation were not necessarily aesthetically or methodologically resolved they believed in the process of re-presentation as a means of keeping the work alive, present, preserved for the consideration of the next generation.

Recall Elaine Scarry in section 1 and her point that beauty inspires replication – and this replication, she says, remains the purest representation of the remembered experience.<sup>462</sup> Together Ihlein and Curham acknowledge the slippage that occurs, during re-presentations saying that the ‘nearly new’, ‘...are not authentic or correct. Rather, the very concept of authenticity and the integrity of the autonomous art object are brought into question by this unique form of art-action-research.’<sup>463</sup> Just as Sturtevant maintains, repetition is difference, so

<sup>460</sup> Curham, L & Ihlein, L 2013, *(Wo)man with mirror, user's manual*, Big Fag Press, Sydney, n.p.

<sup>461</sup> Ihlein, L 2005, ‘Pre-digital new media art’, *RealTime magazine*, issue #66, p. 26, viewed 3 February 2014, <<http://www.realtimearts.net/article/issue66/7779>>.

<sup>462</sup> Scarry, E 1999, *On beauty and being just*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, p. 22.

<sup>463</sup> Curham, L & Ihlein, L 2013, *(Wo)man with mirror, user's manual*, Big Fag Press, Sydney, n.p.

Curham and Ihlein discovered the slippage that would contribute to the re-presentation of various works of Expanded Cinema and in the end, *(Wo)man With Mirror*. Curham, reflecting on early experiments, said, ‘...we tried out a few [re-presentations] with some contact with the original makers – Raban’s, *Breath*, 1974, and 2’45”, 1973, [by British filmmaker William Raban (1948- )]. Then in a more systematic, authorised way Anthony McCall’s (1940- ) *Line Describing a Cone*, 1973, and *Long Film for Ambient Light*, 1975. Lucas is a very good communicator so it was really his skills that paved the way for this more authorised approach.’<sup>464</sup> ‘These early experiments’ says Ihlein, ‘...were pretty rough and ready and some of them failed to have the impact that we hoped they would have based on what we anticipated from seeing documentation of the work. This gave us the sense that even though the works seemed quite simple they rewarded deeper application of attention...’<sup>465</sup>

In 2007 the two travelled to London to complete a residency at Performance Space, immersing themselves in the rich landscape of makers, film organisations, people and archives. Ihlein first met Guy Sherwin in London in 2003 however it was not until 2007 that he felt confident enough to talk to Sherwin about a re-presentation of *Man With Mirror*. ‘What did he think?’ I asked. Ihlein replied, ‘He thought it was a great idea.’ ‘Immediately?’

I asked:

Yes. It’s part of his character. He’s very open and generous in his way of working...he has a whole aspect of his own practice now when he tours and does a film performance night showing various films and performing in different ways he often collaborates with local sound artists on live works where he has no idea what the outcome is going to be. He is quite open to those kinds of chance elements and he hasn’t ever been proprietorial about the intellectual property side of things.<sup>466</sup>

The two met with Sherwin in 2008 when he visited Brisbane to perform in the Otherfilm Festival. This meeting was important because Sherwin had agreed to instruct the artists on how to perform the work. Curham recalls:

...part of the purpose was for him to ‘teach’ us the work. Guy certainly understood our plans but I don’t think he thought particularly deeply about it. I think our commitment to go up to Brisbane in 2008 and spend time in a relaxed way was very important for the success of this relationship...I really like Guy, he has a very wry sense of humour and in my opinion, he is a rigorous artist. And his consistent engagement with film meant we speak the same language – so his work intrigues me.<sup>467</sup>

The five-year gestation period for *Man With Mirror* and the personal and professional relationship with the originating artist sets this work apart from Sherrie Levine’s re-presentations of the

<sup>464</sup> Curham, L 2014, responses to Q&A submitted by Greer Honeywill, 16 February.

<sup>465</sup> Ihlein, L 2014, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 5 February.

<sup>466</sup> Ihlein, L 2014, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 5 February.

<sup>467</sup> Curham, L 2014, responses to Q&A submitted by Greer Honeywill, 16 February.



work of Walker Evans, (discussed in the last chapter) where communication with Evans would not have been possible even if Levine had wished that to occur. Sturtevant used an authorized approach on occasion, while Richard Prince does not look for authorization. Curham and Ihlein, in their users manual developed for Teaching and Learning Cinema state: ‘Following the notion popularized by Fluxus that each artwork is defined by a set of conditions or score, and is reproducible by anyone following those conditions, we have embarked on a series of re-enactments of some Expanded Cinema events as part of our art practice.’<sup>468</sup> The notion of a score echoes the practice of Sol LeWitt in relation to his wall drawings and the desire of Christian Boltanski that in the future artists will re-present his works as a form of collaboration with the absent, originating artist, making works present in a new context.

It is the mirror that creates both the moment and the magic in *Man With Mirror*. The late Australian artist, writer, and curator Ian Burn (1939-1993) wrote that the mirror, ‘...is the surface *par excellence* of late modernism. Its paradoxes confound the illusion of transparency – indexing the instabilities of perception, while offering the possibility of reflexivity.’ As Burn observed, ‘...a mirror produces not only an event or a piece of self-conscious theatre, but also deflects visual attention away from the object itself.’<sup>469</sup> Sherwin’s performance was for one man with a mirror. Did that mean Ihlein would be the performer? Ihlein says:

..so there comes a moment when we say who gets to be the performer?...I’m the man so it’s me and she said fuck that we’re both doing it! So in the doing of it is where you find stuff out. So why restrict ourselves to just one of us doing it and somewhere along the line, you know, the man in the *Man With Mirror* or Dziga Vertov’s [(1896-1954)] *Man With a Movie Camera*, [(1929)] let’s say we give them the benefit of the doubt that when they say man they were meaning human rather than just blokes so therefore whether it’s a woman performing it or a man performing it is not part of the DNA of the work it just happens to have been because Guy Sherwin himself was the artist and he was a man. We kind of blow away any gender-based objection to the idea of Louise performing the work because we did not see that as significant. And then at a certain point since we were both doing it, I don’t know when the idea came up, we thought we could perform at the same time. Which leads to a range of other transformations that are not in Guy Sherwin’s work.<sup>470</sup>

There are actually two mirrors in the original *Man With Mirror*, the second being the film itself. The film is projected onto the actual mirror – the two instruments becoming an amalgam of unpredictable ‘collaborators’. It was partly the weight of the real mirror that convinced Ihlein that Sherwin at some time would have to stop performing the work, therefore creating an opportunity for a re-presentation. The question of the weight of a mirror in performance was something I encountered first hand when working on the re-presentation of Bruce McLean’s *Mirror Work*. The weight of the mirror and public safety influenced my decision to move from

<sup>468</sup> Curham, L & Ihlein, L 2013, *(Wo)man with mirror, user’s manual*, Big Fag Press, Sydney, n.p.

<sup>469</sup> Burn, I 2000, *Dialogue: writings in art history*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, p. 191.

<sup>470</sup> Ihlein, L 2014, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 5 February.

the glass object to mirror finish stainless steel. *Man With Mirror* runs for ten minutes and the mirror used in performance is 61cm x 81cm<sup>471</sup> representing a 4:3 ratio to match the Super 8 film. While the ratio must be maintained, the mirror can vary depending on the height of the performer. For instance Curham used a smaller mirror, 70cm x 52.5cm than the taller Ihlein. Performing with the weight of the mirror for the ten minutes is the challenge.

Bruce McLean's *Mirror Work* was shot in a leafy section of Barnes Common and to keep faith with the work I chose publicly accessible, leafy parks as sites. Guy Sherwin's *Man With Mirror* was shot in densely treed Hampstead Heath. The challenge for Ihlein and Curham was selecting the appropriate location to keep faith with the original work. From the outset there was slippage for all of us. Curham and Ihlein tried a version outside a leafy Petersham house before choosing Prince Alfred Park in Sydney. Curham said:

Our brief to ourselves was outdoors with leaf shadow, which meant sun. We enjoyed allowing some of the neighbourhood to seep in [just as Buwalda did in the second shot of McLean with the mirror] so the business of others in the background in Prince Alfred Park was a plus.<sup>472</sup>

Curham maintains, 'that re-enacting these works is about understanding from the inside, by physically going through the steps...I start to really understand the work – slotting my own body into it.'<sup>473</sup>

I wanted to know if Guy Sherwin had seen *(Wo)man With Mirror* and how he had reacted to the work especially given the slippage from the original. In 2013 Curham and Ihlein took the work to London where it was performed at Apiary Studios (plate 49 image 112) as part of the ongoing Unconscious Archives events programmed by Sally Golding.<sup>474</sup> Curham says:

I think he really liked it a lot. I think he found it more intriguing than he expected, in particular the doubling and what the doubling might do. He spoke quite extensively on the night of the performance...We saw him a few days later and he still commented on it. I don't think that's a very Guy Sherwin thing to do, he tends to be understated.<sup>475</sup>

Ihlein agreed saying:

He [Guy] observed us doing it and through observing us he realised certain things about his own performance of the work. He commented that we perform the work more vigorously than he did. That his performance of it was slower and we ourselves had come to that realisation...His partner Lynn Loo [(1975- )], who is also a filmmaker who Guy collaborates with, attended the performance. Her insights were useful, because she has

<sup>471</sup> The mirror used for *Reflections (After Bruce McLean)* was 45 x 80cm

<sup>472</sup> Curham, L 2014, responses to Q&A submitted by Greer Honeywill, 16 February.

<sup>473</sup> Curham, L 2014, responses to Q&A submitted by Greer Honeywill, 16 February.

<sup>474</sup> *Unconscious Archives* events take place in alternate months at either Apiary Studios in London or Café OTO in Dalston, viewed 10 April 2014, <<http://www.unconscious-archives.org>>.

<sup>475</sup> Curham, L 2014, responses to Q&A submitted by Greer Honeywill, 16 February.



seen Guy perform it so many times and so here she was seeing it performed in a different way. Two people performing simultaneously, in the round, those things she felt were a real addition to the work, additions that enhanced it. So the feedback was positive. We had a discussion panel afterwards. Guy was there on the panel and also film theorists, curators and filmmakers. The work itself only goes for ten minutes but the discussion went for an hour and a bit afterwards.<sup>476</sup>



PLATE 49 IMAGE 112

Louise Curham and Lucas Ihlein, *(Wo)man With Mirror*, 2009

Still from live performance, 18 June 2013

Unconscious Archive Salon, Apiary Studios, London

When Guy Sherwin performed the work in 2006 using the Super 8 film of his performance in 1976, the fact that the artist had aged suddenly became an important part of the work. Something Sherwin did not intend in 1976 and possibly even in the restaging. In the blink of an eye, time had been cut and histories inserted themselves. Ihlein in commenting on this surprising new aspect of the work said Guy, ‘...never intended the work to be a poignant, poetic meditation on aging but that is what it has become. He has to accept that, which he does happily.’<sup>477</sup> Curham sees this aspect as, ‘...part of the beauty of the subsequent repetition.’<sup>478</sup> It is this change that also shifts the meaning of the work to the realm of the memento mori, a meditation on the inevitability of mortality. When Curham and Ihlein perform *(Wo)man With Mirror* audiences consistently provide the feedback that because the man and the woman face each other to perform and the audience naturally clusters around them (as happens in theatre in the round) that the work is somehow about the relationship between men and women or that the two artists must be in a relationship to perform as they do. Like the effect of Sherwin’s aging this was unexpected. And like Sherwin, Curham and Ihlein also had to accept

<sup>476</sup> Ihlein, L 2014, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 5 February.

<sup>477</sup> Ihlein, L 2014, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 5 February.

<sup>478</sup> Curham, L 2014, responses to Q&A submitted by Greer Honeywill, 16 February.

this audience view.

True to their shared interest in contributing to the aesthetic and historical archive of Expanded Cinema the artists have created a detailed *(Wo)man With Mirror Users Manual* to enable others to experiment with and perform the work. There is even a timeline included indicating that between 2033 and 2035 the artists will teach the next generation how to perform the work – the children of Lucas Ihlein (Albie May), Louise Curham (Oliver) and Guy Sherwin (Kai and Mei). This approach was suggested by Guy Sherwin himself. Lucas Ihlein has created a thought bubble diagram outlining possible motivations for staging re-presentations – a simple diagram that stimulates discussion about the practice, responsibility and the process of re-presentation.

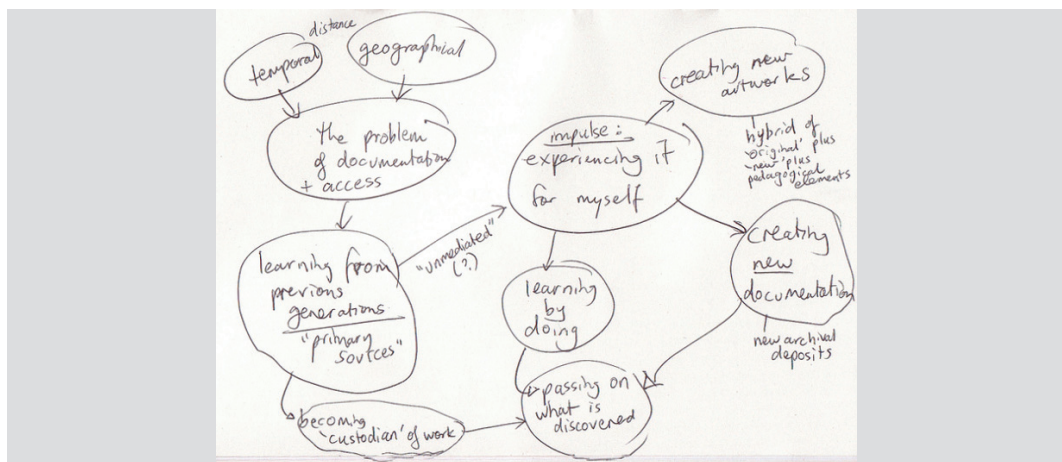


PLATE 50 IMAGE 113

Thought bubble diagram, Lucas Ihlein

Reproduced with the kind permission of Dr Lucas Ihlein

Curham is an archivist by day, a field highly relevant to Expanded Cinema and its history, and to film itself. After fourteen years she still remains as excited about the potential of the archive:

When I first became interested in this field my mentor said that archives were incredibly exciting because they are a last frontier for discovery. In a world where everything is known, the past can never be definitively known. Archives have this constant potential for new knowledge because the intersection between the present and the past means the past is always different and the meaning of the past is always different.<sup>479</sup>

<sup>479</sup> Curham, L 2014, responses to Q&A submitted by Greer Honeywill, 16 February.



PLATE 51 IMAGE 114-115

Louise Curham, rehearsing *(Wo)man With Mirror*, with Val Curham, Petersham, 2009

Lucas Ihlein, rehearsing *(Wo)man With Mirror*, with Owen Ihlein, Petersham, 2009

In the performance of *(Wo)man With Mirror*, like the glass skyscrapers and their countless reflective encounters – building to building – the artists stand opposite each other. They look at each other, reflect each other, and that constantly moving, fragmented and multiplied gaze is returned and echoed by the mirror. Glass and reflections are part of the everyday. Imagine for a moment what a city would be like without its curtains of glass reflection to confound the eye of the spectator. In the modern world the apparent impossibility of the scale and transparency of the new glass-clad skyscraper ‘solicited an aesthetic response of delight, a feeling of seeing the impossible happen...’ and in turn led Philip Fisher to make the claim that, ‘Architecture set out to produce experiences of wonder.’<sup>480</sup> Glass spends its day in countless reflective encounters with its neighbours and at night ‘transmits’ internal light to create the fragile, luminous, energy wasting cities from which we cannot seem to free ourselves. Our cities of glass are really cities of mirrors. We are always watched and we are all watching. Was Jorge Luis Borges – the writer so fearful of mirrors – afraid in the city?

As we move about our cities we glance through the glass perhaps in a prurient manner hoping to sight some sort of indiscretion or merely to look in amazement. As watchers in the interplay of reflections we are also implicated – we too can be seen. I look ‘in’ or ‘at’ and my gaze is returned – I am captured, embedded, in the return gaze. Our cities of glass set up an endless repetition of mirror images that consume the spectator, caught in the act of consuming. As James Elkins writes, ‘...how can the observer look at the object if it is multiplying and changing under his very eye? The supposedly static object is a moving target, like the exit door in a hall

<sup>480</sup> Fisher, P 1998, *Wonder, the rainbow, and the aesthetics of rare experiences*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 4.

of mirrors.<sup>481</sup> Glass in all its transparent and reflective beauty was perhaps a strange choice of material to cast in the role of mediator between private and public space. Fisher reminds us that, ‘...it was the modern corporation with its optimism and confidence, its pleasure in power and in pleasure itself, that ordered and paid for these buildings...’<sup>482</sup> The result, Fisher claims, is ‘...an architecture of light, of sun and blue skies, a radiant city as Le Corbusier liked to call it...’<sup>483</sup>

Recently as an ‘insider’ standing at a second floor window looking out, musing, surveying the ‘radiant city’ of Melbourne and its activity with no particular purpose, I became aware of my glance skimming across the surfaces of things. Gradually the paradigm changed. I began to feel watched rather than being the watcher. Refining my gaze to look at the building directly opposite, a universe of reflections told the story of one building looking at another, an infinity of reciprocal reversals and repetition. While it was me who felt watched I was actually insignificant, part of a much larger play of glances. Recast as *the innocent eye* I was no more than witness to the event – a mere fragment between slices of reflection – caught within the ongoing operatic repeating-ness. I glanced and the glance returned in echoes. It was a drab Melbourne afternoon, not Corbusier’s preferred blue-skied day nevertheless the chance discovery drove me to my *ever present eye* to record the event albeit from one perspective. On the street below as Casey says, ‘...the casual walker looks out with his vagrant, versatile eyes but the denizens of the street (human beings as well as built places) look back, much as one windowpane mirrors back to another its own image.’<sup>484</sup> This reciprocity of looks is the well-trodden area of Walter Benjamin exemplified in his unfinished *Arcades Project*. Benjamin says:

The whispering of gazes fills the arcades. There is no thing here that does not, where one least expects it, open a fugitive eye blinking it shut again; and should you look more closely, it is gone. To the whispering of these looks, the space lends its echo...<sup>485</sup>

<sup>481</sup> Elkins, J 1998, *The object stares back*, Harvest edition published by arrangement with Simon & Schuster, New York, p. 39.

<sup>482</sup> Fisher, P 1998, *Wonder, the rainbow, and the aesthetics of rare experiences*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 4.

<sup>483</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>484</sup> Casey, ES 2007, *The world at a glance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p. 219.

<sup>485</sup> Benjamin, W, Eiland, H & McLaughlin, K (eds) 2002, *The arcades project*, (1982) Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 878.

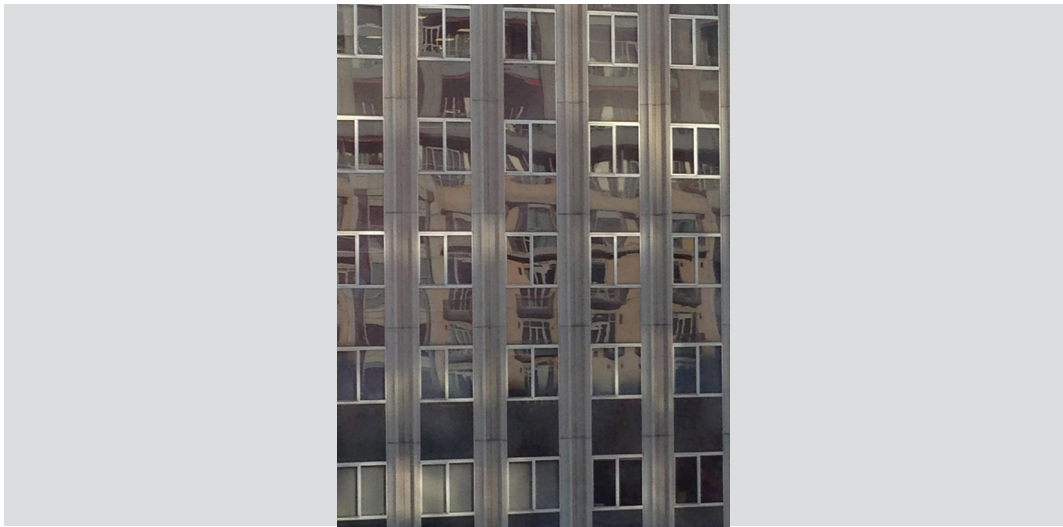


PLATE 52 IMAGE 116

*Façade 45-55 Swanston Street, Melbourne*  
iPhone image Greer Honeywill

It is the same repertoire of whispering looks and returned echoes that sit at the heart of the reflective work, *Écho d'échos: vues plongeantes, travail in situ*, by Daniel Buren, discussed in section 2, chapter 2. And the same overwhelming choreography of reciprocal looks that occur when the spectator experiences Richard Wilson's, (1953- ), site specific work in the basement of the Saatchi Gallery, London, *20:50*, 1987. A work that required the entire basement of the Saatchi building to be flooded with used sump oil (*20:50*). In both of these works the reflections are so confounding and the spectatorial disorientation so great that stringent safety conditions apply to visitors. The experience of being watched by the building made me think of the American artist Richard Estes (1936- ) one of the founders of the international Photo-realist movement of the late 60s and 70s. Estes looked in wonderment at reflections in the glass curtain walls and the reflective materials used to detail buildings in modern American cities. He was interested in the mirror qualities of these cities of light, working with photography to create paintings that looked like photographs. As a student at the South Australian School of Art in the sixties, I found Estes new and exciting. His work represented for young art students, the ultimate city of excitement and light, New York. Of the next decade Robert Hughes said:

...the vogue for information went two ways in the early seventies. One took the form of conceptual art; the other, a direct descendent of Pop Art, was Photo-realism. No art ever celebrated the random sight with such enthusiasm: these literal snapshots of store windows, suburban shopping malls, motorcycles, aircraft engines, or rodeo horses, enlarged and then rendered in fulsome detail with an air-brush, derived much of their popularity from the sheer accumulation of data in them.<sup>486</sup>

The Richard Estes image that has stayed with me is the image of *Telephone Booths*, 1967, a work

<sup>486</sup> Hughes, R 1980, *The shock of the new*, Knopf, New York, p. 364.



that takes advantage of the reflections in mirror finished metal and glass and revels in what Hughes called the 'sheer accumulation' of data. Estes continued to paint in exactly the same way for his entire life and continues still.



PLATE 53 IMAGE 117

Richard Estes, *Telephone Booths*, 1967, acrylic on masonite, 122 x 175cm  
Collection, Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid

Jeff Malpas in his paper 'Truth in Architecture', says that the architecture of the last one hundred years seems to have prioritised the visual in a number of ways. The most obvious being '...the ubiquitous use of glass in modern and contemporary building.' This approach to design he says promoted a language, '...of reflection, of mirroring, of transparency and opacity...' and a near obsession, '...with light as refracted and reflected through glass.' Despite this the modern city is not always 'easily seen.'<sup>487</sup> New York duo Elizabeth Diller (1954- ) and Ricardo Scofidio (1935- )<sup>488</sup> of Diller Scofidio + Renfro, in an essay written for the exhibition *CTRL [SPACE]* maintain that in the modern world glass was the fabric considered, '...a material of *truth*, an

<sup>487</sup> Malpas, J 2012, 'Truth in architecture', in *The significance of philosophy in architectural education*, conference proceedings, 9-11 October 2009, Department of Architecture, University of Patras, Athens p. 83.

<sup>488</sup> In 1979 Diller + Scofidio founded a successful interdisciplinary design studio integrating architecture and the visual and performing arts. Charles Renfro (1965- ) joined the Diller + Scofidio studio in 1997 and in 2004 he became a partner. In recognition of this change the studio became Diller Scofidio + Renfro. Diller + Scofidio first came to my attention when I visited the 1996 Venice Biennale of Architecture. The collaborators installed an emotionally unsettling work titled *Bad Press: Dissident Ironing* which reflected on obsessive, compulsive behaviour. This work was discussed in greater detail in *Colours of the Kitchen Cabinet*, my 2003 doctoral exegesis.



instrument of disclosure...':

According to the rhetoric of the visionary new technology of the curtain wall, glass would liberate architecture from the disciplinary enclosure of masonry...The transparent building that was to permit unlimited vision to the outside, in fact, exposed itself to observation from that very same outside. Glass was unexpectedly a two-way system, an alienating medium of optical transgression, a threat to privacy, and an agent of all that was sinister about modern architecture...Rather than the open society promised...the technology of glass spawned new paranoias...the material of freedom had turned into a material of anxiety and gave rise to the question: whose freedom and on which side of the glass?<sup>489</sup>

Corporations, fearful of total transparency, sought to re-establish a hierarchy of private and public that was more acceptable than total permeability or freedom to look. The solution took the form of tinted and reflective glass which Diller Scofidio + Renfro say:

...promised a material privacy, comfort, and security...Though full transparency was traded away, the new glass restored the one-way gaze. Currently 'privacy glass' promises both worlds transparency *and* control – alternately at the flip of a switch.<sup>490</sup>

Academic and writer James Steele cites in his book *Architecture Today* the powerful role Ludwig Mies van der Rohe played in the development of our cities of light and reflectivity although Steele is not in total agreement with the architect. Van der Rohe applied his reductive concept of the simple glass box of the cityscape to the domestic dwelling in the landscape:

By taking this desire for simplicity to the extreme in buildings such as the Barcelona Pavilion, constructed in 1928-9, and the Farnsworth House, 1945-51, Mies intended to maximise the feeling of a free flow of space between zones in the interior, and between inside and out...Glass, however, arguably the most important material for the early Modernists, always intervenes between the two, keeping unpredictable, dangerous forces at bay. Glass a visual, but not actual, connection with the external world, abstracting it from experience and presenting it as a pattern on a transparent wall...nature is treated as a remote backdrop, a changing panorama to be observed from an immutable, crystalline capsule.<sup>491</sup>

Steele, looking back from 1997, is critical of the glass box saying that despite, '...all the lip service paid by early Modernists to 'breaking the box'...the classic glass curtain wall between columns still effectively kept nature at bay.'<sup>492</sup> In the aftermath of the Mies exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1947, curated by Philip Johnson, the Barcelona Pavilion (1929) became a preoccupation for Modernist architects.<sup>493</sup> Colomina muses on the

<sup>489</sup> Diller Scofidio + Renfro, in Levin, TY, Frohne, U & Weibel, P (eds) 2002, *CTRL [SPACE]: rhetorics of surveillance from Bentham to big brother*, exhibition catalogue, 12 October 2001-24 February 2002, ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany, p. 354.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid., p. 354.

<sup>491</sup> Steele, J 1997, *Architecture today*, Phaidon Press, London, p. 110.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>493</sup> The Barcelona Pavilion by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe was presented as the German Pavilion for the 1929 International Exposition in Barcelona, Spain.

outcomes. As ‘...glass architecture became dominant, the pavilion was hailed as the most beautiful building of the century, exemplifying the cult of transparency...Glass architecture also made it to the suburbs,’ in the form of the picture window, ‘...which had its origins in high architecture.’<sup>494</sup> The vernacular picture window overlooked whatever was in front of it (generally the street) while the architect designed window was a considered placement taking into consideration the existing views and orientation.

In our ever-surveilled world Diller Scofidio + Renfro no longer believe that glass to, ‘...be the innocent skin that once hoped seamlessly to connect interior and exterior space...’ Instead something new emerged to replace the original anxiety of the public and the corporations. Now, Diller Scofidio + Renfro say, ‘...the fear of being watched has transformed into the fear that no one is watching.’<sup>495</sup> In a lecture as part of the BMW Guggenheim Lab, New York, in 2011,<sup>496</sup> Liz Diller spoke to the International theme of *Confronting Comfort* in our cities and the issue of transparency:

The Orwellian future has come and gone. The once-paranoid fear that someone may be watching has transformed into the fear that no one is watching at all...surveillance is rapidly becoming the dominant organizing practice of contemporary urban space. The ubiquity of security cameras, GPS tracking technologies, and large-span glass facades are welcome signs of a social contract ensuring our security and the freedom to be seen. Transparency is a new social right. In today’s omni-optic culture, we are not only comfortable with tracking technologies and video surveillance but have adapted them as new performance vehicles—we actively engage live cameras and role-play in front of windows. Twenty-four-hour surveillance is the norm of reality TV shows, one of the most popular forms of contemporary entertainment, while social networking sites and personal webcams showcase an acceptable form of exhibitionism.<sup>497</sup>

Such is our need to be seen, recognized, acknowledged and photographed that as individuals we do not recoil from the gaze of the camera, seen or unseen, instead we actively seek the gaze. Elkins says:

Looking is hoping, desiring, never just taking in light, never merely collecting patterns and data. Looking is possessing or the desire to possess...there is no looking without thoughts of using, possessing, repossessing, owning, fixing, appropriating, keeping,

<sup>494</sup> Pelzer, B, Francis, M & Colomina, B 2001, *Dan Graham*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, p. 85.

<sup>495</sup> Levin, TY, Frohne, U & Weibel, P (eds) 2002, *CTRL [SPACE]: rhetorics of surveillance from Bentham to big brother*, exhibition catalogue, 12 October 2001-24 February 2002, ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany, p. 355.

<sup>496</sup> The BMW Guggenheim Lab is a peripatetic, international initiative that has been exploring the theme *Confronting Comfort* in our cities. The Lab, part urban think tank, part community centre and public gathering space, opened in 2011 in New York and of the many contributors and participants Diller Scofidio + Renfro took part in the season as did Dan Graham. In 2012 the Lab moved to Berlin and in 2013 it moved to Mumbai, India, followed by an exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, titled *Participatory City: 100 Urban Trends from BMW Guggenheim Lab*, October 2013-January 2014, viewed 28 April 2014, <<http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org>>.

<sup>497</sup> Diller, E 2011, *Confronting comfort: transparency*, BMW Guggenheim Lab, viewed 28 April 2014, <<http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org>>.

remembering and commemorating, cherishing, borrowing and stealing. I cannot look at *anything* – any object, any person – without the shadow of the thought of possessing that thing. Those appetites don't just accompany looking: they are looking itself.<sup>498</sup>

Whether we realise it or not we are always in thrall to wonder, to the magic of the unexplained, the sudden and Philip Fisher's, '...accidental and extremely short-lived moments of beauty...' <sup>499</sup> Casey says, the moment:

...lacking temporal breadth, can only be encountered in the unexpected emergence of an event that we experience *as suddenly happening*...the Moment, the Augenblick – not a timeless instant but an open moment in which the temporal and the eternal conjoin... or in which decisiveness occurs...a valid temporal modality in which the sudden arises, unbidden yet with incisive presence...<sup>500</sup>

As identified by Diller Scofidio + Renfro and Elkins, it is the contemporary societal need to be seen that drives the acceptance and success of works by artists like Graham, Erlich and Buren. The latest work in the reflective pleasure palace vein to visit Australia is by the Belgian artist, Carsten Höller (1961- ). Titled *Golden Mirror Carousel* the work is exhibited at the National Gallery of Victoria, 10 October 2014 – 01 March 2015. These immersive works are created so that we may engage with play. In the process, we are watching and being watched, capturing with the *ever present eye* a replica of the physical work and always in search of the moment of wonder or the moment just passed.

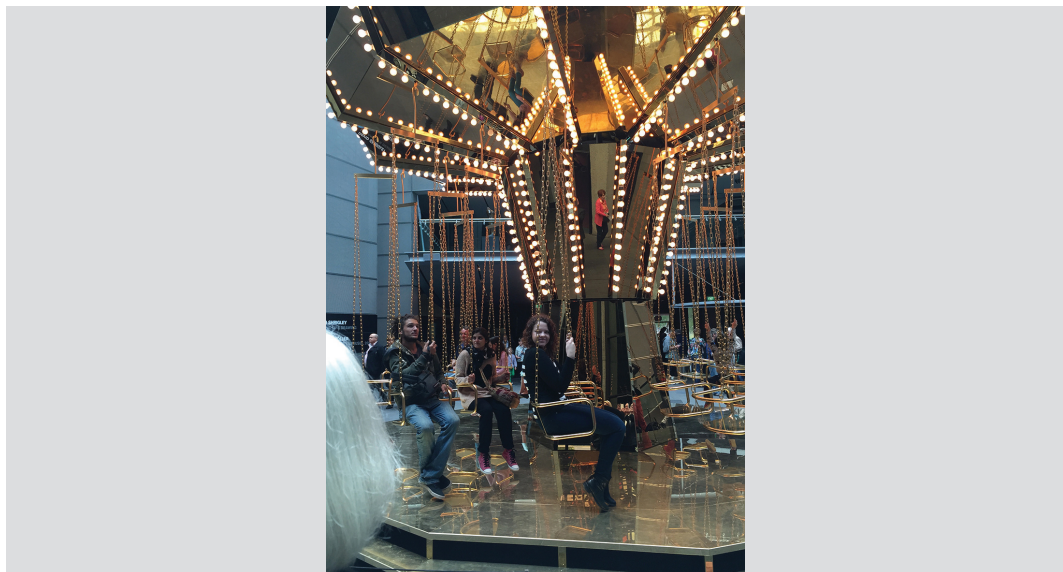


PLATE 54 IMAGE 118

Carsten Höller, *Golden Mirror Carousel*, National Gallery of Victoria  
iPhone image Ross Honeywill

<sup>498</sup> Elkins, J 1998, *The object stares back*, Harvest edition published by arrangement with Simon & Schuster, New York, p. 22.

<sup>499</sup> Fisher, P 1998, *Wonder, the rainbow, and the aesthetics of rare experiences*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 25.

<sup>500</sup> Casey, ES 2007, *The world at a glance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p. 212

# Conclusion

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## Conclusion

So you should simply make the instant stand out...You will show the flow of events...permitting the spectator to experience this Now on many levels, coming from Previously and Merging the Afterwards...[that way] He [the spectator] is sitting not only IN your theatre but also IN the world.

– BERTOLT BRECHT<sup>501</sup>

Hannah Arendt said in *The Life of the Mind*, ‘...thinking is always out of order, interrupts all ordinary activities and is interrupted by them.’<sup>502</sup> In this research project islands of gathered knowledge related to the *ever present eye* (in particular the iPhone) and our societal fixation with the instrument are juxtaposed with the inherent poetry of the moment, the beauty inherent in the everyday lived experience and unanticipated chance occurrences, blinked into existence. In order to research I have meandered, flâneur-like, through multiple landscapes and my thinking and experimentation mirrors the randomness of the route. ‘All thinking is discursive’ according to Arendt but at some point the task is to transform this experience in order to assemble ‘a line’ of thought.<sup>503</sup>

I have observed the world as a play of light, an iridescence that returns its light to the observer as refraction – shards of faceted polychromatic fragments in constant motion – as I too am in motion. Iridescence colours concepts as they change from moment to moment, especially where changes collide with accidental light effects, unanticipated reflections, or flickering images of people in motion as if reflected in revolving glass doors. As American writer and social philosopher, Norman O. Brown says meaning is not, ‘...in things but in between; in the iridescence, the interplay; at the intersections, at the crossroads.’<sup>504</sup> This play of light, this iridescence, bewitches the eye as it transforms into ever more fragments that mirror and

<sup>501</sup> Brecht, B, in Berger, J 1991, *About looking*, Vintage Books (1980), London, p. 65.

Berger has extracted this quote from Bertolt Brecht’s poem, *Portrayal of past and present in one*, written between 1947 and 1953.

<sup>502</sup> Arendt, H, McCarthy, M (ed.) 1981, *The life of the mind*, Harvest/Harcourt Brace & Company, (one-volume edition), San Diego, p. 197.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid., pp. 201-202.

<sup>504</sup> Brown, NO 1990, *Love’s body* (1966), University of California Press, Oakland, pp. 246-247.



multiply.<sup>505</sup> In this expansive view the *eye* draws in and in the very act of drawing in it also expands out as a means of capturing the world.<sup>506</sup> There is a doubling that implicates other images that are themselves, ‘implicate fragments.’ According to Roger Shattuck no matter how insignificant the fragment, the power of the implicate fragment is that it can breathe ‘...forth its secret connections to everything else.’<sup>507</sup>

As part of the human condition we seek to understand our connection to the world, each other and ‘everything else’ and in this search for understanding the camera has never before been so important. However, it seems that the more we feel we are connected by creating an avalanche of images which we share and use in various ways, the more we are somehow made separate as if we are disconnected fragments in the flux. The more we try to capture the moment in the lens of the camera, the harder it is to see, like the confounding effect of reflections or iridescence. As the glance slithers across surfaces in search of the moment, the very thing we search for is always losing its presentness.

In the studio I have attempted to push aside the, ‘daily barrage of information and images’<sup>508</sup> that Thomas Keenan refers to in his essay for the *CTRL [SPACE]* catalogue, in order to free my mind to return to a state of ‘innocence’ (or as much innocence as possible) in an attempt to *see* in a different way and to experiment with outcomes in order to find that which I did not know before. To place myself, as Jacques Derrida says, ‘...at a point where I do not know any longer where I am going.’<sup>509</sup> In this new state of mind I have collaborated with existing ideas and

<sup>505</sup> The idea of the iridescence of things was introduced to me by Jeff Malpas, who discusses the term, in reference to Heidegger and the German philosopher Dieter Henrich, in an interview with Lynda Burns for *The Antipodean Philosopher*.

Shakespeare also touches on iridescence. In *The Tempest* (1611) he introduces Iris as a character, a messenger between heaven and earth, Goddess of the rainbow. Iris is said to be the root of the word iridescent. Iris is also associated with the eye and therefore sight is implicated. In Act IV scene i, Iris introduces herself as the messenger for the, *The Queen o’ the sky Whose watery arch, and messenger, am I...*

Shakespeare, W, Irving, H (essays) circa 1905, *The complete works of Shakespeare*, Collins’ Clear-Type Press, London, pp. 17-19.

In *Swann’s Way*, Proust talks of iridescence. *Someone had the happy idea of giving me, to distract me on evenings when I seemed abnormally wretched, a magic lantern, which used to be set on top of my lamp while we waited for dinner-time to come: in the manner of the master-builders and glass-painters of gothic days it substituted for the opaqueness of my walls an impalpable iridescence, supernatural phenomena of many colours, in which legends were depicted, as on a shifting and transitory window.*

Proust, M, Scott Moncrieff, CK & Kilmartin, T (translation), Enright, DJ (revised) 1992, *In search of lost time*, vol. I (1913), ‘Swann’s Way’, The Modern Library, New York, p. 10.

<sup>506</sup> Malpas, J, in Oppy, G & Trakakis NN (eds) 2012, *The antipodean philosopher: volume II: interviews with Australian and New Zealand philosophers*, Lexington Books, Lanham, p. 113.

<sup>507</sup> Shattuck, R 1984, *The innocent eye: on modern literature & the arts*, Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, p. 39.

<sup>508</sup> Keenan, T ‘Publicity and indifference: media, surveillance, ‘humanitarian intervention’, in Levin, TY, Frohne, U, & Weibel, P (eds) 2002, *CTRL [SPACE]: rhetorics of surveillance from Bentham to big brother*, exhibition catalogue, 12 October 2001-24 February 2002, ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany, p. 557. The author is quoting Cushman T, Mestrovic, SG (eds), 1996, *This time we knew: western responses to genocide in Bosnia*, New York University Press, New York, p. 79.

<sup>509</sup> Derrida, J, in Macksey, R & Donato, E, (eds) 1972, *The structuralist controversy: the languages of criticism and the sciences of man*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, p. 276.

artworks, conflating theory with artist interviews and studio experimentation. In the process I have used an array of cameras, including CCTV and the iPhone, in order to participate in a dialogue of generational aliveness.

It is curiosity about the world we live in that drives, ‘...our attitude toward photography...’ according to Roger Scruton. ‘The photograph addresses itself to our desire for knowledge of the world, knowledge of how things look or seem.’<sup>510</sup> While John Berger talks of ‘the spectacle’ that incites the impulse to photograph in turn creating an eternal present of immediate expectation where:

...memory ceases to be necessary or desirable. With the loss of memory the continuities of meaning and judgement are also lost to us. The camera relieves us of the burden of memory. It surveys us like God, and it surveys for us. Yet no other god has been so cynical, for the camera records in order to forget.<sup>511</sup>

Richard B. Woodward draws our attention to the fact that:

Today, the negligible cost of making pictures and uploading them to networks gives anyone with a cell phone the chance in theory to appear instantly before an audience of billions on seven continents. In the absence of authority figures on the World Wide Web, exhibitionism is no longer judged by most as shameful. For those who measure success by counting hits on their websites; self-promotion is a necessary strategy in the competition for eyeballs in the digital marketplace.<sup>512</sup>

Woodward’s comments evoke those made by Rebecca Shanahan in section 3, chapter 4, talking about her project, *Neighbours*. Shanahan sees current social media as a form of self-surveillance saying:

This comes up over and over again when I find myself talking to artists and to students who are in their 20s and 30s. They are living with photography in a way that I never did at that age and they are self-surveilling in a way that I never imagined.<sup>513</sup>

Today everyman(woman), certainly in the western world, is armed with a smartphone as we in turn, are caught in the frame of the many CCTV cameras in our cities. The infallibility of the smartphone bestows upon everyman(woman) a mastery and from this perspective we feel in control. In our need to understand the world we push the camera into every space, lift every stone, exposing and communicating everything we find. Beatriz Colomina says:

<sup>510</sup> Scruton, R 1981, ‘Photography and representation’, *Critical inquiry*, vol. 7, no. 3, University of Chicago Press, p. 590.

<sup>511</sup> Berger, J 1991, *About looking*, Vintage Books, New York, p. 59.

<sup>512</sup> Woodward, RB, in Phillips, SS (ed.) Baker, S, Brookman, P et al 2010, *Exposed: voyeurism, surveillance and the camera*, exhibition catalogue, 28 May-3 October 2010, Tate Modern, London, UK, p. 230.

<sup>513</sup> Shanahan, R 2013, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 16 October.

The idea of a single image commanding our attention has faded away. It seems as if we need to be distracted in order to concentrate. As if we – all of us living in this new kind of space, the space of information – could be diagnosed en masse with Attention Deficit Disorder.<sup>514</sup>

Woodward maintains that contemporary artists and critics have long kept a watchful eye on the sociological and psychological effects of the increasingly available camera.<sup>515</sup> Our current approach to the documentation of self and the everyday is equalled by the constancy of the *ever present eye* of the CCTV camera. As Woodward says:

Security cameras are now an accepted feature of daily life, installed by the millions in cities and suburbs to guard against the threat of crime and terrorism. Not only can these devices be found in almost any public space, from airports to department stores to hospital nurseries, their presence is often legally required to prevent lawsuits for negligence. We couldn't live without them now even if we wanted to.<sup>516</sup>

Acceptance of the CCTV camera sits at the heart of Christian Boltanski's work *The Life of C.B.* discussed at length in section 3, chapters 1 and 2. And a CCTV camera also sits at the heart of my studio works *Walking the Dog (and other things)* and *Coming and Going*, (discussed in section 3, chapter 3). In these works the CCTV camera is used as a means of gathering footage and the layers of footage in turn create a mirror, a portrait, of a particular time and place.

Steve Hoffenberg writing about smartphone numbers and the democratization of visual expression says:

Less than a decade from their becoming widely available, the number of camera phones that have been produced now exceeds the total number of film cameras and digital cameras ever made in the history of photography...By the end of the decade, about three billion people worldwide will have camera phones, and they will capture about one trillion images per year...<sup>517</sup>

Hoffenberg continues, '...photography has taken the visual expression out of the hands of the exclusive realm of artists, and literally put it in the hands of the masses. That changes everything.'<sup>518</sup> The question is, 'does it change everything?' Monash academic, Daniel Palmer says, '...the debate about phone cameras parallel[s] the public paranoia that accompanied the

<sup>514</sup> Colomina, B 'Enclosed by images: architecture and the post-sputnik age', in Levin, TY, Frohne, U, & Weibel, P (eds) 2002, *CTRL [SPACE]: rhetorics of surveillance from Bentham to big brother*, exhibition catalogue, 12 October 2001-24 February 200, ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany, p. 323.

<sup>515</sup> Woodward, RB, in Phillips, SS (ed.) Baker, S, Brookman, P et al 2010, *Exposed: voyeurism, surveillance and the camera*, exhibition catalogue, 28 May-3 October, 2010, Tate Modern, London, UK, p. 230.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid., p. 230.

<sup>517</sup> Hoffenberg, S 'Photography changes and democratizes visual expression', in Heiferman, M (ed.), Foresta, MA (foreword) 2012, *Photography changes everything*, Smithsonian Institution and Aperture Foundation Inc., New York, p. 174.

<sup>518</sup> Ibid., p. 174.

rise of the portable cameras,<sup>519</sup> such as the Box Brownie in the late nineteenth century. Palmer believes, ‘...new technologies invariably generate anxiety. However, the relationship between phone cameras and social media networks is particularly potent, and the introduction of GPS technology complicates things even further, generating new ideas such as ‘locational privacy.’<sup>520</sup>

Hoffenberg is correct in saying the camera no longer belongs to the exclusive realm of the artist and photographer. The amateur who appeared post-1900 is now fully engaged with the *ever present eye* and currently every sector of the arts is experimenting to a greater or lesser degree with possibilities related to CCTV, the smart phone and a plethora of newly emerging technologies. Artists such as Denis Beaubois (1970- ), Ryoji Ikeda (1966- ) and Rafael Lozano-Hemmer (1967- ), for example, have been experimenting with CCTV cameras and new technologies for more than a decade. While experimentation with the new is the norm for some artists, what is different is the societal shift that can occur when everyman(woman) is also involved. For instance the reciprocal dialogue between the work of the artist and the spectator in the form of hundreds of thousands of images with the potential to be disseminated across the world in an instant is an effect that has never before existed.

Colomina’s comment about en masse Attention Deficit Disorder is reflected in comments made by Nick Cave, Australian music artist, author, screenwriter and composer. He says, ‘I don’t like cameras full stop. They are the fucking bane of my existence and everybody has one. I do a concert these days and I’m singing into a bank of iPhones.’<sup>521</sup> Today audiences are less interested in experiencing and more interested in recording for transmission as a validation of self. Proof of attendance at the concert becomes more important than living or experiencing the moment. The potency of the concept and the focused need to supply proof of existence at that time, in that place, is something I discussed with Christian Boltanski (section 3, chapters 1 and 2). At the exhibition, *The Fashion World of Jean Paul Gaultier: from the sidewalk to the catwalk* at the National Gallery of Victoria, I observed this spectator reaction first-hand. Here the spectator seemed more interested in recording and disseminating images rather than experiencing the exhibition they had come to see. My automatic response was to document their actions (see plate 55) thereby creating another layer, and in doing so the exhibition was placed at an even greater distance.

<sup>519</sup> Palmer, D 2011, ‘Art on the run: ubiquitous mobility and the camera phone’, *Artlink: Art & Surveillance*, vol. 31, no. 3, p. 20.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

In this reference Daniel Palmer is quoting the term ‘locational privacy’ from Gordon, E & de Souza e Silva, A 2011, *Net locality: why location matters in a networked world*, Blackwell-Wiley, Boston.

<sup>521</sup> Author unknown, 2014, ‘Talking Point – Real Time’, *The Mercury*, Wednesday 8 January 2014, p. 18.



PLATE 55 IMAGES 119-120

*The Fashion World of Jean Paul Gaultier: from the sidewalk to the catwalk,*

17 October 2014 - 8 February 2015, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, AUS

iPhone image Greer Honeywill

Recipients who receive the images may not have been at the concert (or the exhibition), and the images sent bestow upon the sender a particular validation – a kind of one-upmanship. Yet the concert was not really watched and the exhibition not experienced. Both became an event to record/transmit, more like reality TV. We have become recorders of the world, spectators rather than connected human beings – watchers rather than participants. Everything is a subject and everything is at a distance. Bauman puts the view that:

Superficiality, emotional and temporal flatness, slicing of the time flow into unconnected fragments...is now within reach of most (though not all!) urban dwellers...<sup>522</sup>

To highlight the role of the smartphone and its ability to separate us all from everyday experience I refer to French sociologist and academic, Luc Boltanski<sup>523</sup> and his book *Distant Suffering: morality, media and politics*, talks about the need to bring into effect in French law what is called, ‘...the obligation to assist someone in danger.’<sup>524</sup> It seems strange indeed that we might require laws to ensure that help is offered in emergencies. As a child I remember help was always available from a stranger because compassion was a felt emotion in the community: compassion for one’s neighbour, even for a stranger. Now we fear the stranger and the stranger fears the hand that helps. Boltanski is interested in this paradigmatic situation. He explores compassion and what has become, ‘the politics of pity’ and the ‘relationship between spectacle and action.’ He claims that, ‘...the spectacle of suffering [seems] incongruous when viewed at a *distance* by people who do not suffer.’ The viewing of suffering at a distance he says ‘infallibly

<sup>522</sup> Bauman, Z 1995, *Life in fragments: essays in postmodern morality*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, p. 133.

<sup>523</sup> Luc Boltanski (1940- ) is a French sociologist and Professor at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, and founder of the Groupe de Sociologie Politique et Morale. He is a leading figure in the new French ‘pragmatic’ school of sociology. He is Christian Boltanski’s older brother.

<sup>524</sup> Boltanski, L, Burchell, G (translation) 1999, *Distant suffering: morality, media and politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 7.

provokes' unease and yet the viewer may continue to watch.<sup>525</sup> In our separation, our distancing from reality, we live our lives in episodes. The essence of the episode Bauman says '...is that it leaves no lasting trace; life lived as a succession of episodes is a life free from worry about consequences.'<sup>526</sup> Each episode is lived through the lens – the *ever present eye*.

The brilliance of the invention that we rely upon has changed us and I use one powerful example, one example from a multitude of possible examples that supports Boltanski's view about the need for a law that obliges the spectator to assist someone in danger. In December 2012, in an actual event, a man was pushed onto the railway tracks of the New York subway at 49<sup>th</sup> Street, Manhattan. As an oncoming train approached, CCTV showed that the man tried to pull himself back on to the platform. He was apparently on the track for sixty seconds but no-one at the scene attempted to help, despite the fact that later experiments have shown the man could have been pulled clear of the train. Instead those present (said to be at least eighteen people) either adopted the role of spectator, pulling out their smartphones to photograph the action, or they recoiled altogether from the situation. No help was offered. The victim became spectacle, observed at a distance as the train crushed him to death. There had been an argument between the victim and another man on the platform and therefore it could be said there were extenuating circumstances. While the argument may have frightened some of the waiting commuters, this is an extreme example of the way in which the community now seeks to distance itself from the suffering of others. At least one man on the platform, a professional freelance photographer, sold an image to the New York Post, which carried it on the front page the next day under the headline 'Doomed'. The question arises, should the New York Post have published the image of a man about to die? The moral and ethical obligations of the newspaper link to Luc Boltanski's despair about how insensitive to the suffering of others contemporary western society has become.<sup>527</sup> The incident reinforces the notion that everything is seen as spectacle, something to be photographed rather than evaluated and actioned. Bauman's reference to '[s]uperficiality, emotional and temporal flatness, [and the] slicing of the time flow into unconnected fragments' is not just something we observe in others, we are all implicated.<sup>528</sup> To paraphrase playwright Bertolt Brecht, shouldn't we be IN the theatre of the everyday and also IN the world?<sup>529</sup> We need to be connected rather than distracted.

<sup>525</sup> Boltanski, L, Burchell, G (translation) 1999, *Distant suffering: morality, media and politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 8-12.

<sup>526</sup> Bauman, Z 1995, *Life in fragments: essays in postmodern morality*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, p. 5.

<sup>527</sup> Collins, L et al 2012, 'There was no way I could have saved him': photographer claims he was too far away to pull 'doomed' subway rider off train tracks', *Daily Mail Australia*, posted 5 December 2012, viewed 10 December 2012, <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2243344/Subway-death-New-York-Post-photographer-claims-help-doomed-Ki-Suk-Han.html>>.

<sup>528</sup> Bauman, Z 1995, *Life in fragments: essays in postmodern morality*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, p. 133.

<sup>529</sup> Brecht, B in Berger, J 1991, *About looking*, Vintage Books (1980), London, p. 65.





PLATE 56 IMAGE 121

Author unknown, 2012, 'Doomed', *New York Post*, Tuesday 4 December 2012, p. 1  
 Photographer R. Umar Abassi

This body of research is of contemporary relevance. It is not sited in the past, although we cannot escape our inevitable connection to the history of ideas. It is timely, about our time, a time we may barely recognize in the next five years. For example the iPhone was first announced in 2007 and now this *eye is ever present*. To write about the circumstances in which we live, a world of escalating change, one must accept constant slippage and a melting, mutating landscape. Only limited comfort can be drawn from distant perspectives. What is happening is in the now and the full understanding of what we are living through is yet to come.

With every keystroke I make on the laptop, change is occurring beyond my control. In section 4, chapter 2 I referred to the 2009 court action brought against artist Richard Prince. In March 2014, a New York court found Richard Prince not guilty of infringing copyright after he appropriated images from a book by the French photographer Richard Cariou. This is a decision that will have major repercussions in the art world. In May 2014, Elaine Sturtevant passed away five months before the opening of her major survey exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (discussed in section 4, chapter 2), amidst escalating international interest in exhibitions that relate to the aliveness of generational replication and the extension of the moment.

I have explored a rich landscape of reflective artworks that mirror the world but the exhibition I could not ignore despite its late appearance in relation to this research was *Christian Capurro: SLAVE* a solo exhibition at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (August-September 2014). By chance this exhibition drew on all of the underlying themes of this research, wonder, walking, reflection and replication. Themes set within the context of the capture of both the moment and the everyday. Further, like the generational re-presentation, or Guy Sherwin's

*Man With Mirror* as *(Wo)Man With Mirror*, by Louise Curham and Lucas Ihlein, discussed in section 4, chapter 3, *SLAVE* is an exhibition that illuminates generational re-presentation linking nearly a century of ideas and three central players.

Between 1919 and 1920 the highly influential Russian avant-garde painter and architect, Vladimir Tatlin (1885-1953) created a scale model and drawings for a monumental building that would tower over St Petersburg – a utopian architecture of glass and steel. Tatlin called it *Monument to the Third International*. While the *Monument* in support of Lenin's propaganda was never built, the idea remains a source of interest for scholars, artists, architects and designers, as demonstrated by the installation of a 1:40 scale model of the artist's work at the Royal Academy of Arts, London in 2011-2012.<sup>530</sup> Tatlin is the first player in this scenario.

The second player is American minimalist Dan Flavin (1933-1996). Flavin became interested in Tatlin's ideas in the 1960s and between 1964 and 1990 he created thirty-nine *monuments* to the Russian constructivist. These *monuments* are less about the re-presentation of an object and more about the physical re-presentation of ideas. However, it is this re-presentation of the idea linked to the specific object that helps to keep Tatlin's concept of a towering monument present, creating an extended moment of generational aliveness. A sculptor of light and spectacle, Flavin chose to work for the greater part of his career with the ubiquitous fluorescent tube, creating ambitious arcades and corridors in which the artist, curiously did not intend the beholder to linger. Curator of *Dan Flavin: Lights*, Rainer Fuchs says by choosing '...the tubes as the material for his works, Flavin signalled the increasing proximity of art with everyday life...' <sup>531</sup> Robert Smithson in 1966 said 'Flavin's fluorescent lights all but prevent prolonged viewing; ultimately there is nothing to see.' Smithson saw Flavin's light works as less about light and more about changing time. If '...time is place then innumerable places are possible, time breaks down into many times...A million years is contained in a second, yet we tend to forget the second as soon as it happens.' <sup>532</sup> Donald Judd also wrote on Flavin in the sixties. Briony Fer says Judd, '...allowed the encounter to stretch a little...Judd lingered. He lingered long enough to see the changes; long enough to see what happened when you adjust the eyes to Flavin's situations; long enough to see the process of estrangement unfold.' <sup>533</sup>

<sup>530</sup> Dixon, J, Cross, C, Woodward, C (architects) and Rindl, S (engineer) 2011, *Tatlin's Tower*, information sheet, 29 October 2011-29 January 2012, Annenberg Courtyard, Royal Academy of Arts, London, viewed 24 November 2014, <<http://www.static.royalacademy.org.uk>>.

<sup>531</sup> Fuchs, R (curator) 2012, *Dan Flavin: Lights*, 13 October 2012- 3 February 2013, MUMOK, Vienna, viewed 28 November 2014, <<http://www.mumok.at>>.

<sup>532</sup> Smithson, R, Flam, J (ed.) 1966, 'Entropy and the new monuments', *The Collected Writings*, University of California Press, Oakland, pp. 11-15.

<sup>533</sup> Fer, B 2004, *The infinite line: re-making art after modernism*, Yale University Press, New Haven, p. 65.

In 2013, while artist-in-residence with Sammlung Lenkis in Vienna,<sup>534</sup> Christian Capurro (1968- ), the third player in this story, drifted through unfamiliar spaces, the epitome of the undirected flâneur, spending days walking aimlessly through the galleries of Vienna until his attention was abruptly arrested. At the Museum Moderner Kunst (MUMOK) Capurro's flâneur suddenly collided with eight of Dan Flavin's, *monuments for V. Tatlin* part of the exhibition *Dan Flavin: Lights*. The effect created for Capurro an unexpected experience akin to wonder.<sup>535</sup> In an interview with Simon Rees,<sup>536</sup> Capurro said his approach to the residency was not directed to begin with but something significant happened in the encounter with the Flavins. Capurro said he suddenly found himself '...with a new tool, in this case the iPhone, an encounter with the Flavins and curiosity to see how they talked to each other.'<sup>537</sup> Embracing the act of replication Capurro decided to make hand-held, videos on his iPhone. In the making of the videos he concentrated on stillness just as I concentrated on stillness as I held the mirror to the landscape to make *Reflections (after Bruce McLean)*, and during my video recordings of the wondrous effects gathered from the walls and ceiling of my house (the *Ephemerata* iPhone series). However, the very stillness Capurro and I sought is almost impossible and the longer you try to hold your body still the more it tremors. Capurro said 'the longer I held this frame the less composed I was able to be...the Flavin gets more and more frenetic...' <sup>538</sup>

Juliana Engberg in her introduction to the exhibition described the iPhone-made, hand-held, videos as part homage, part theft, yet also compelling 'portraits' of Dan Flavin's iconic works.<sup>539</sup> Capurro summarises:

If this work is about anything it's not about Dan Flavin's work it's a space between those things – between recording, capturing, rendering and the 'someone else' quite literally standing in my space in this gallery seeing these works. It's that space, the ambiguous space of spectatorship as much as anything that mattered to me...There's a confusing or a doubling that is enacted.<sup>540</sup>

For me Capurro's *monuments* stand as glistening strands of connectedness linking the history of ideas from Tatlin to the present – demonstrating the sudden and unexplained effect of wonder – stretching and extending the moment and keeping the 'lost' originators present in a dialogue

<sup>534</sup> Martin Lenikus is a private collector who has established a large collection of emerging Austrian and international artists. Sammlung Lenikus, Vienna, stages exhibitions and supports an international artist-in-residence program.

<sup>535</sup> *Dan Flavin: Lights*, 13 October 2012- 3 February 2013, MUMOK, Vienna.

<sup>536</sup> Simon Rees at the time was Head of Programming and Development at MAK – the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, Vienna. Rees is now Director, Govett-Brewster Gallery, New Zealand.

<sup>537</sup> Rees, S 2014, *Interview with Christian Capurro*, video, produced by accaonline, viewed 22 September 2014, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3qL-N7iuWo>>.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid., <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3qL-N7iuWo>>.

<sup>539</sup> Engberg, J 'Introduction', in Capurro, C 2014, *Christian Capurro: SLAVE*, exhibition catalogue, 16 August-28 September 2014, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, AUS, n.p.

<sup>540</sup> Rees, S 2014 *Interview with Christian Capurro*, video, produced by accaonline, viewed 22 September 2014, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3qL-N7iuWo>>.

of generational aliveness.<sup>541</sup>

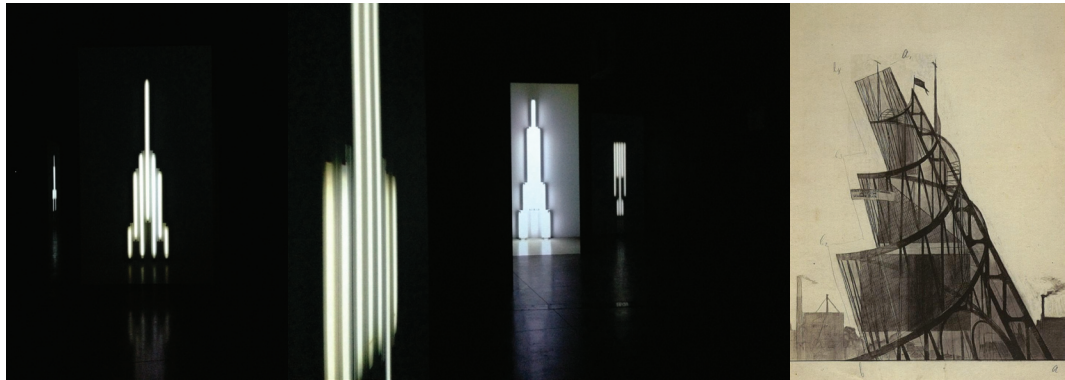


PLATE 57 IMAGES 122-124

*Christian Capurro: SLAVE*, 2014 (two views)

Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, AUS

iPhone images Greer Honeywill

Vladimir Tatlin (1885-1953), *Monument to the Third International: side elevation*, 1920, drawing

N. Punin Archive, St. Petersburg, Russia

Robert Nelson says of the iPhone, ‘...the process of venerating an image with the intercession of a smartphone builds the new church of private experience. It’s as if mobile devices are the new pocket bibles by which you translate and navigate all realities in order to reach lofty transcendence and thence communicate the sublime to your ingathering of followers.’<sup>542</sup> This is Bauman’s territory and he believes we brought this on ourselves. It was, he says, the human drive for ‘...effortlessness, convenience and comfort that finally triumphed over the independent mind as the social media network emerged.’<sup>543</sup> That is why Hoffenberg is right, ‘everything has changed.’ As Engberg has said:

Video cameras, as such, seem nearly redundant. Almost everyone carries a small portable device capable of taking photos, making films and navigating places – creating, connecting and sending images and words out into the fibre-optic world. The idea of protecting copyright, of preventing unauthorised photography and filming, has been more or less defeated by the ubiquity of recording devices and the sheer multitude of unmonitored occasions in which copyright is challenged.<sup>544</sup>

Throughout this research, in a state of ‘innocent’ curiosity and optimism, I have meandered, flâneur-like, through internal and external landscapes, engaging in collaborations and mythmaking, with and without political intent. I have done this in order to perfect the capture

<sup>541</sup> I experienced *Christian Capurro: SLAVE* at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art on Thursday 28 August 2014.

<sup>542</sup> Nelson, R 2014, ‘Christian Capurro: a slave to the screen’, *The Age, Entertainment*, September 16, viewed 31 October 2014, <<http://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/christian-capurro-a-slave-to-the-screen-20140915-10h8ap.html>>.

<sup>543</sup> Bauman, Z & Lyon, D 2013, *Liquid surveillance: a conversation*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 43.

<sup>544</sup> Engberg, J ‘Introduction’, in Capurro, C 2014, *Christian Capurro: SLAVE*, exhibition catalogue, 16 August-28 September 2014, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, AUS, n.p.

and extension of isolated moments of beauty and to reflect upon the way in which the tools of capture, CCTV and the smartphone in particular, have changed us as individuals and as a society.

In summarising my studio works it may be said my works are hidden, rather like Boltanski's work, *Storage Memory* when the subscription is completed (discussed in section 2, chapters 1 and 2 and section 3, chapter 1), or *Les archives de Christian Boltanski, 1965-1988* at Centre Pompidou, Paris – are the thoughts, documents and artifacts the artist pledges, really inside the six hundred and forty-six rusty biscuit tins? My studio works are intentionally intertwined with the ideas and artworks of others with whom I have sought to playfully collaborate. As Boltanski would say the idea is the important thing.<sup>545</sup> In the process of making works I have experienced the power of the reciprocal gaze of the Tasmanian landscape as it mirrored back its secrets, while I composed a myth about an animal that may or may not exist here (the series *Et in Arcadia Ego* and the billboard intervention ...*Are we in Arcadia?*). I have participated in acts of generational re-presentation – sometimes losing myself in the labyrinthine world of mirror reflections as can be seen in *Reflections (after Bruce McLean)*. In the work *Blow-Up* I have invited others to join me in Alice's world on the other side of the mirror and I have gathered present moments into a mirror of a particular place at a particular time in the works, *Walking the Dog (and other things)* and *Coming and Going*. The most potent guiding force has been the experience of wonder and the discovery of the extraordinary (and now disappeared) moving images that for a short time spontaneously occurred on the walls and ceiling of my house. If I had not been open to looking at the world in a different way, if I had not been 'listening', I may not have recognised these events. The works *Arcadia* and *Ephemerata* attempt to replicate these ephemeral and transitory moments of beauty, to hold on to them, to examine them, to explain them to myself and to others in order to keep the moment present.

In conclusion, uniqueness of contribution does not necessarily stem from the answering of questions. Heidegger, once a believer in the value of the question, comprehensively changed his mind in 1959, asserting that questioning was not necessarily thinking. Instead he demanded a stepping back to enable 'listening.' I extend this view to encompass looking. Heidegger wrote at the time that '...one of the exciting experiences of thinking is that at times it does not fully comprehend the new insights it has just gained...'<sup>546</sup> To think, he said, '...is before all else to listen, to experience...and not to ask questions'.<sup>547</sup> For Heidegger, to 'experience something' meant to '...attain it along the way, by going on a way'.<sup>548</sup> For me uniqueness stems from

<sup>545</sup> Boltanski, C 2011, Interview with Greer Honeywill, 12 October.

<sup>546</sup> Heidegger, M, Hertz, P. D. (translation) 1971, *On the way to language*, Harper & Row, New York, p. 72.

<sup>547</sup> Ibid., pp. 75-76.

<sup>548</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

the personal journey, 'the way' and the telling of that idiosyncratic journey as a weaving of discursive narratives and studio works that aim to create, momentarily, a new way of looking at something that may already exist or something undergoing change. Small shifts rather than seismic events.

In reviewing the gathered fragments that form the warp and weft of the narrative, the residue of the architecture of everyday life, I believe we are all changed by the omnipresence and capability of the *ever present eye*. We are simultaneously empowered and endangered in a way that Kodak could never have anticipated at the turn of the last century. Just as CCTV technology provided artists with a new means of exploring the world, the smartphone has become the technology of the present moment, its capabilities now central to our restless search for the moment, meaning and knowledge of our everyday world.

While the new brings change that may have a dystopian dimension, particularly in the way the smartphone separates the spectator from the experience, the new also brings optimism as a counterpoint. As Philip Fisher says, the '...new and the unformulated are exactly those realms where the aesthetics of wonder and other strong experiences of the unexpected, the unplaceable, the radically new are necessary guides to attention, curiosity, and the process of creating intelligibility.'<sup>549</sup>

The optimistic view is that within the richness, the inexhaustibility and the distractedness of the now, new dialogues of generational aliveness will emerge, stimulated by the visceral experience of wonder.

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<sup>549</sup> Fisher, P 1998, *Wonder, the rainbow, and the aesthetics of rare experiences*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 144.



## APPENDIX A

### LIST OF SUBMITTED WORKS

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Greer Honeywill

*The Ever Present Eye: a studio exploration of the moment and everyday lived experience*

*Blow-Up*, 2015

Printed vinyl on mirror finish stainless steel

2.1m x 2.1m

*Ephemerata #1* (videos #4 and #6), 2012-2013

Single channel, floor screened, iPhone videos

Infinite duration

*Reflections (after Bruce McLean)#1-#3*, 2013

Pigment prints, 100 x 75cm

Eds. 3 with two artist proofs

*Coming and Going*, 2013-2015

Single channel, HD, CCTV footage, split screen version

Infinite duration

(left hand side of screen)

*Walking the Dog (and other things)*, 2013-2015

Single channel, HD, CCTV footage, split screen version

Infinite duration

(right hand side of screen)

*Et in Arcadia Ego #1-#6*, 2013-2015

Pigment prints

67cm x 100cm

Eds. 3 with two artists proofs

*Ephemerata #2* (videos #2, #3, #5 and #7), 2012-2013

Single channel, iPhone videos

Infinite duration

*Arcadia*, 2011-2015

Single channel, HD, video

Infinite duration

Offsite

*...Are We In Arcadia?* 2015

Billboard, corner Barrack and Liverpool Streets, Hobart

300cm x 600cm

19 January-20 February 2015

## APPENDIX B

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## APPENDIX C

### INTERVIEWS

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#### Louise CURHAM

Born 1971 New Zealand, lives and works in Canberra

Artist, filmmaker and archivist, Louise Curham collaborated with Lucas Ihlein to re-present an authorised version of Guy Sherwin's *Man With Mirror*, 1976, as *(Wo)man With Mirror*, 2009.

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My 'conversation' with Louise Curham took the form of a Q&A in an attempt to coincide the gathering of information from Louise with the live interview with Lucas Ihlein. Questions were sent to Louise on 1 February and answers were received (as requested) 16 February 2014.

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Why did you and Lucas Ihlein choose to re-present *Man With Mirror*? What was the pathway to this particular work?

During my MFA (COFA 2004), Expanded Cinema was important, however, descriptions and photos of the works led only to questions. On the one hand, I was interested in them as 'études' for a filmmaker (my original training was at VCA in film, my second training was an MFA, my third in AV archives, my fourth in archives and records). On the other hand, I was deeply curious about them. How could these be film? What was it like for people working within a lexicon of film to make work like this? Filmmakers who were quite aggressive toward the film image itself often reducing it, removing it, and obliterating it, intrigued me. For example, Valie Export's (1940 - ), *Tapp- und Tast-kino* (*Tap and Touch Cinema* – the one where you put your hands in the box strapped to her naked chest), Takehisa Kosugi's (1938- ), *Film #4*, 1965 and Anthony McCall's (1946- ) *Long Film for Ambient Light*, 1975.

I tried out a few in a totally unauthorised way. Then I met Lucas Ihlein and we tried out a few with some contact with the original makers – William Raban's (1948- ) *Breath* (1974), and *2'45"* (1973). Then in a more systematic, authorised, way Anthony McCall's *Line Describing a Cone* (1973) and *Long Film for Ambient Light*. Lucas is a very good communicator so it was really his skills that paved the way for this more authorised approach. I guess I contributed tenacious enthusiasm! I was very keen to see what *Long Film* was all about. I'm still interested in that work and its impact on Anthony. It's a complex work but it's hard to really understand without experiencing it. Anthony pretty much stopped making that kind of work with that piece until his resumption in the last decade. Re-enacting these works is about understanding from the inside, by physically going through the steps. For me I start to really understand the work - slotting my own body into it.

I am also very interested in the slippage. The most exciting thing about *(Wo)man With Mirror* was discovering we could both be in it together. That emerged gradually but it was quite exciting when we really got to grips with it. This kind of necessary removal from the original

is what makes this work interesting for me. My unauthorised early versions really played this up but ultimately that's an unsatisfying approach because you haven't got a calibration with the original as a starting place. It is necessary to understand how the original piece is meant to come together as the maker saw it and by attempting to colour inside the lines as much as possible causes the necessary deviation to emerge with integrity and all of a sudden you really do have a new piece of work.<sup>1</sup>

Looking back from 2014 the following strands of activity were critical:

STRAND 1: My MFA provided relevant art historical context while it was Jeffrey Shaw's (1944- ) *MovieMovie* (1967) in Peter Weibel's essay that lead me to Expanded Cinema.<sup>2</sup> I am always seeking the local so always hunting for local iterations. In my own practice, I make 'salon' performances which sit somewhere between installation and performance. For example, *Niche #2 Salon*, 2002 at Performance Space in Antistatic, *Maps (Part I)* 2000 and *Maps (Part II)* 2002 at Aphids. It was Performance Space curator Blair French who sowed the seed for me regarding Lucas and then I met him at a screening event I curated.

STRAND 2: Sydney was quite barren in the early 2000s for moving image. I had been involved peripherally with the Melbourne Super 8 Film Group (MS8FG) just before I left Melbourne in April 2000. Tony Woods (1940- ) introduced me to Al Young, also ex MS8FG. Al Young is a filmmaker who, at that time, was also keen to start a Super 8 group in Sydney. We decided to set up the Sydney Moving Image Coalition (SMIC), tag line 'for moving image makers and moving image lovers.' I was at COFA at the time and met Dan Edwards a Melbourne writer on film and cinema and his friend Brendan Phelan. Brendan was living at Lanfranchi's [a warehouse space in Chippendale with artist run performance spaces] which was fairly recently established and they were looking for events to host. We held screenings at Lanfranchi's and other venues between 2003-2006. Lucas came along to about the second Lanfranchi's event.<sup>3</sup> These had quite a clear structure – you bring it we show it, primary sources, performed film (Expanded Cinema). SMIC became the Teaching and Learning Cinema.

STRAND 3: In 2007 Lucas and I completed a residency at Performance Space, Carriageworks, Sydney – we developed an ambitious program of work which included staging *Long Film for Ambient Light*, working on some Raban pieces and spending time with Mike Leggett's (1945- ) work. In 2008 Guy Sherwin visited Brisbane for the Otherfilm Festival. We went up and spent a few days with him. Guy's partner Lynn, Sally Golding (1979) and I were all working in film preservation at the time. He showed us the technical aspects of making *Man With Mirror* including demonstrating with his baby son Kai's high chair tabletop.

Why Guy? Not long after I met Lucas, he left for London to research Expanded Cinema. In

<sup>1</sup> Curham and Ihlein interviewed each other in 2004 to accompany a poster titled *Re-Enacting Expanded Cinema – History Made Flesh*, accepted for the Association of Moving Image Archivists conference in the US. <<http://www.teachingandlearningcinema.org/expanded-cinema-re-enactments/amia-conference-poster-2004/>>.

<sup>2</sup> Weibel, P 'Narrated theory: multiple projection and multiple narration', in Rieser, M & Zapp, A (eds) 2002, *New screen media. cinema/art/narrative part 1 structural overview: cinema, art and the reinvention of narrative*, The British Film Institute, London and the Center for Art and Media (ZKM) Karlsruhe, Germany. This publication coincided with the exhibition in 2001-2002, *CTRL [SPACE]: Rhetorics of Surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother*, ZKM, Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany, discussed in the chapters of the exegesis and the publication of the 655 page supporting catalogue. Peter Weibel was involved as editor of the catalogue.

<sup>3</sup> Teaching and Learning Cinema, Lanfranchi's archive 2003-2004, <<http://www.teachingandlearningcinema.org/tag/lanfranchis/>>.

fact he borrowed all the research notes from my MFA. When he came back, he was very excited about Guy's work and showed me VHS copies of *Man With Mirror*. I recall Lucas met Guy in London and they had obviously hit it off quite well. At that stage, we hoped to mount an exhibition of some kind. Blair French among others was aware that we were working on this. I was quite strident about an Australian component that took me to Melbourne to spend a day with Arthur Cantrill (1938- ) and Corinne Cantrill (1928- ). Albie Thoms' (1941-2012) made an observation (after a trip to Europe in 1968)<sup>4</sup> that the Cantrill's Expanded Cinema work was as good as anything, if not better, than he'd seen in Europe.

Sydney curator Anneke Jaspers invited us to be in *Imprint*, her 2009 exhibition at Artspace, Sydney, so that was the impetus to get underway with actually doing something with this piece [the re-presentation of Guy Sherwin's work].

When did you decide to collaborate with Lucas?

We met at about the second SMIC as I have said. He brought along his coffee machine to a few screenings and then he went to Europe to research Expanded Cinema. I did my unauthorised re-enactments while he was away. When he came back, he was very keen to work together on some kind of Expanded Cinema exhibition. This morphed into me visiting the Cantrills and Lucas and I staging the *Line Describing a Cone* tour, followed by the residency at Performance Space, followed by the opportunity that *Imprint* at Artspace offered.

How did you communicate the idea of re-presentation to Guy Sherwin?

By the time I met Guy, it was well established we wanted to re-enact his piece. We had worked on Anthony McCall's *Long Film for Ambient Light*. The Mark Webber curated screen event, *Shoot, Shoot, Shoot* [launched at the Tate in 2002] had been shown round the world including Australia and this event revived an interest in British film experimentalism. Against this background the idea evidently made sense to Guy – he's a very relaxed person. Guy came to Brisbane in 2008 and Lucas and I went up to meet him. It was fun, he was travelling with his family and we all went for a day out on the ferry. We shot some Super 8 film which I finally developed last year [2013] and gave to Guy when we were in London. The Brisbane meeting meant we had all the information we needed about the work and we had seen it performed live. Around this time we also had an outcome for it with Anneke's show, so away we went. But my guess is that Guy may not have felt deeply either way about it but certainly had no problem with us doing this if we wanted to. He gave me that impression when he came to see us perform it in London last year – his reaction was very positive and I think he hadn't really put his mind to what our work would really be like. He was genuinely excited about it when he saw it.

When you approached Guy Sherwin was he affronted that you wished to re-present (some would say appropriate) his work?

I certainly recall Guy being keen for us to come up to Brisbane and in part the purpose was for him to 'teach' us the work. I think our commitment to go up to Brisbane in 2008 and spend time in a relaxed way was very important to the success of this relationship. I really like Guy, he has a very wry sense of humour and in my opinion he is a rigorous artist. And his consistent engagement with film means we speak the same language – so his work intrigues me. His family is gorgeous and it's a shame we don't all live in the same city, our children are similar ages

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<sup>4</sup> Thoms, A 1978, *Polemics for a new cinema*, Wild & Woolley, Watsons Bay.

and they all took a shine to each other when we were in London, as kids do. And Lynn [Lynn Loo, Guy's partner and collaborator] and I have a lot to discuss. We have both worked in film preservation, we both have material film practices and of course, her work is beautiful and she manages to be an artist, a mum and earn a living.

Elaine Sturtevant's mantra when re-presenting the work of other artists was *repetition is difference*. There is always subjectivity at play and slippage. In your decision-making the work became a work for two, a man and a woman. How did you arrive at that decision?

This emerged as a reality rather than as a decision. It went along these lines: we shot a film each on the same day in the same conditions in the same location. When we started talking about how the films could be performed, we realised we could perform them together. I'm not certain if we discussed this before we shot the films or after. I know when we shot them we were focused only on the logistics of the choreography. We had to shoot them twice as it turned out, due to a parallax problem with my S8 camera. I find in general in my work with Lucas, my sense is that we don't seem to make decisions as such, most things seem to resolve as we continue on with the process of the task at hand. When it gets to the presentation end, decisions are made, but in the making space.

Were there other differences or slippages?

You can see some of them illustrated in the User's Manual – mirror size is the one that comes to mind. The mirror size is proportional. Mine is smaller because I'm shorter. I shot a version with my mum – her mirror is smaller than mine because she is shorter than me.

Bruce McLean's *Mirror Work* was performed in a park and Guy Sherwin's *Man with a Mirror* was performed in a park. Did you perform in a park? How did you choose the park to maintain the spirit of the work?

Our brief to ourselves was outdoors with leaf shadow, which meant sun. The first version (which failed due to parallax error) was shot at our share-house in Petersham. Prince Alfred Park, the second choice, was pragmatic – across the road from Lucas' studio next to the station for my arrival from Canberra. Our Petersham version was leafier but we enjoyed allowing some of the neighbourhood to seep in so the business of others in the background in Prince Alfred Park was a plus – a discovered pleasure rather than a plan. This is another slippage from Guy's densely treed Hampstead Heath setting. Guy's is very nature.

We seek to do a dissemination project for the work, which involves putting the User's Manual to work to teach other artists how to do it<sup>5</sup> An element to this that I would like to explore is the background, what people choose, how much we feel we need to direct this. It's an interesting one.

Did Guy Sherwin see *(Wo)man With Mirror*? What did he think about it?

I think he really liked it a lot. I think he found it more intriguing than he expected, in particular the doubling and what the doubling might do. He spoke quite extensively on the night of the performance in the Unconscious Archives salon discussion at Apiary Studios hosted by Sally Golding. We saw him a few days later and he still commented on it. I don't think that's a very

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<sup>5</sup> Refer to the Teaching and Learning Cinema website for more information and images, under *(Wo)man with mirror* users manual, <<http://www.teachingandlearningcinema.org>>.

Guy Sherwin thing to do, he tends to be understated, I'd say.

It was a very long time between the making of *Man With Mirror* (1976) and Guy Sherwin's decision to re-stage the work (2006). This meant that in the interim he had aged and was therefore different from the image on the Super 8 film. This became part of the beauty and poetry of the subsequent repetition. Do you know why Guy Sherwin took so long to recognise the potential of restaging?

I think he responded to interest from audiences. I'd have to re-read our own timelines and notes but my recollection is that *Shoot, Shoot, Shoot* was instrumental in reigniting interest in the work. I have never heard Guy make any comment himself about the poignancy of young-Guy and the aged-Guy, so evident for audiences. I think he is quite careful to distance himself from this kind of comment that links to 'affect' – I think Guy stays rigorously focused on the material elements. It's my experience in other areas of my practice, the more one concerns oneself with facts and material conditions, the more poetry spits out the other end but as the maker, it's not for you to look closely at this.

Re-presentation had its moment in the late 60s and early 70s and then returned to the background in art discourse and activity, never quite disappearing. Today it is actually moving to the foreground why do you think that is?

My day job is as an archivist. When I first became interested in this field my mentor said that archives were incredibly exciting because they are a last frontier for discovery. In a world where everything is known, the past can never be definitively known. Archives have this constant potential for new knowledge because the intersection between the present and the past means the past is always different and the meaning of the past is always different. I am still excited by this idea, 14 years later. In the archives, a fact is utterly dependent on its context and understanding what that context is (or can be) – very complex. I think we all understand that because of the role of the audience in making work (completing it as they do for Expanded Cinema), work behaves differently in different times, or maybe I should say works have a different impact/emphasis in different times. For a start, these are extremely strong artworks in themselves. There's no denying *Man With Mirror* is a beautifully simple work that results in a beautifully complex visual experience. I'm surprised *Long Film for Ambient Light* is not presented more often – I still think that's a really important work.

Secondly, like my initial interest, people read about ephemeral/live/time-based artworks, but to get any real sense of them, you need to experience them. Thirdly, in the last decade, it's my observation that the conservation discipline has got really excited about preserving ephemeral/time-based art and curators have got really excited about finding ways to both preserve and re-present work like this. Fourthly, the corollary of the digital environment is the body, our own bodies, and other people's bodies in the same space as ours. I see this at work in the way audiences are engaged by artworks from the past that happen in time that require the presence of people.

Why are we as artists often compelled to re-present the work of artists of another time? Sherrie Levine, Sturtevant, Prince and others have been given big survey exhibitions or retrospectives at major institutions around the world in recent times reinforcing the serious focus the area of re-presentation is currently claiming.

For me, there is something in the work I want to understand for myself. This compels me to want to map it onto my own body as in the case of Guy's piece or to live through the experience

of the piece as in the case of McCall's *Long Film for Ambient Light*.

In the 60s the criticism of Sturtevant's re-presentations were strong enough to keep her from making art for a decade. When she returned to the studio that criticism inspired her to move to a more supportive country (France). There was criticism from my university colleagues about my act of re-presentation as part of my research – it was deemed more appropriate to be creating something 'original'. But what is original? Doesn't everything link to the history of ideas? Don't we all borrow? Were you criticised?

Our collaboration makes us quite fearless. We're answering questions for ourselves and in one sense this is truly action research that has happened to find resonances with audiences. We were doing this work with no audience it just happened that audiences were interested. For my archivist self, it's gathering up the traces of the past and seeing what happens when they are put together. For my artist self it's gathering up the traces and running them through the algorithm that Lucas and I represent.

Lucas has said that one reason for re-presenting is that the artist becomes an experiential archivist. Would you comment on this?

Authenticity and reliability are the critical attributes of archival documents. Unfortunately, those properties map uncomfortably to artworks. In the archival sense, authenticity means the record remains as it was when it was created, reliability means its content can be trusted, what it purports to be is what it is. You can see how those properties would be important if you were trying to prove your residency status, for example. I guess you could say the discipline of conservation is all about authenticity (seeking to keep the work as it was when the artist made it). It's harder to see how reliability maps. It's harder to say how an artwork can be what it purports to be – but it is possible to say that about a re-enactment. Maybe that's where experiential archivist is a useful term because it foregrounds subjectivity, experience = inherently subjective. In describing our work as experiential archiving, it clears up that we're not trying to purport to be the original work.

If we look at reliability from our own perspective rather than the perspective of the original work, then our work really is all about reliability – we're trying to locate the work for ourselves, locate how we can bring what we see as the work to life. By definition, because it's us and not the original maker, it must be different from the original. But in this process there is a lot of effort by us to understand the work as the original maker intended it. Earlier in this conversation I talked about calibrating to the original. If you take it totally at face value, experiential archivist is a useful phrase because it tells you our focus is on the experience of things from the past – the experience for us, and through us as a conduit for the experience of the work by others.

The other key role of the archivist is in identifying value – in the archives field, this is called appraisal. So from that point of view, we have made an appraisal of the work to engage with it – we're intrigued, compelled, interested enough in the original to want to spend a lot of time understanding it and mapping it onto ourselves in some capacity.



## Dr Lucas IHLEIN

Born 1975 Sydney, based in Wollongong

Artist, researcher, curator, Dr Ihlein also lectures in media arts at Wollongong University. Lucas Ihlein collaborated with Louise Curham to re-present an authorised version of Guy Sherwin's *Man With Mirror*, 1976, as *(Wo)man With Mirror*, 2009.

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My interview with Lucas Ihlein took place on 5 February 2014 at Sydney Airport and was recorded. Questions prepared for Louise Curham and Lucas Ihlein were much the same, however, in a written Q&A the respondent usually stays with the questions whereas in a live interview there is slippage between the prepared question and unanticipated material that arises.

Knowing that I had re-presented a work by Bruce McLean Lucas Ihlein began by questioning me. The process was a good warm up for two people who had not previously met, both of whom are interested in the act of re-presentation.

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### Why did you and Louise Curham choose to re-present *Man With Mirror*? What was the pathway to this particular work?

I was aware of Expanded Cinema as a – well you couldn't call it a movement – but a bunch of related activities in the early 2000s. It grew out of my interest in Fluxus but the only works I was exposed to in terms of their existence were those that had some kind of document. In 2002 a film curator in London called Mark Webber organised a program called *Shoot, Shoot, Shoot*. It toured internationally. Webber hosted a night of English Expanded Cinema at the Melbourne and Brisbane film festivals as part of his *Shoot, Shoot, Shoot* program.<sup>6</sup> *Man With Mirror* was not part of that but a range of other works were – they were all separated from their makers so they were all works that were in some way tourable without the original maker being there. But they were all works that came from the London Filmmakers Cooperative. So that was the touch stone...that awareness that the works came from that program and then the program linked back to the London Filmmakers Coop as a kind of key place where those kind of things had come from.

My interest in experimental film developed in the early nineties when there was a course at the university run by a guy called Peter Mudie who it turned out later did his whole PhD research about the history of the London Filmmakers Coop. So that influence reached right back then. Peter Mudie swooped over a very broad history of experimental cinema and the closest we got to something like Guy Sherwin would have been Malcolm Le Grice (1940- ). He would have shown a bunch of works by Malcolm Le Grice. Not Expanded Cinema works though. They're just too hard to show that's the problem.

### The works are hard to show in what sense?

You need to bring together a whole lot of factors including the original filmmaker as opposed to a standard film screening where all you need is the film which you can order from the

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<sup>6</sup> Ihlein, L 2005, 'Pre-digital new media art', *Real Time*, issue #66, p. 26.

distributor and have your own film screening in the absence of the filmmaker. So those kind of vectors led me towards the London Filmmakers Coop and somewhere along the line I must have come across documentation relating to *Man With Mirror*. I went to London in 2003 and I don't know if it was the first place that I became aware of it [*Man With Mirror*] or whether I knew about it before that, because I was corresponding with people in several organisations in London. There was one called the LUX and another one called the British Artists Film and Video Study Collection at Central St Martins. I was enquiring about Expanded Cinema and I was talking to a lot of people at the time about wanting to tour a program of Expanded Cinema works to Australia. My advice on that kind of program was that its all fine but if you are wanting to bring these British works to Australia its quite tricky because Australia Council Grants are for Australian works, not for touring British work to Australia. It was suggested that I contact the British Council and so on. I even did a budget and worked out how much it would cost to bring out people like Guy Sherwin, Malcolm Le Grice and Anthony McCall (1946- ). I came to realise an art administrative project of that scale, was way beyond my capacity. I sketched it up as a proposition and shopped it around to a few people and then I thought – I'll go to London and meet some people and work out what's needed.

Now in retrospect I'd say that that was actually a misguided project. What Louise and I have done since then is more in tune with what I'm actually interested in – the research and execution in, a very slow way, of particular works rather than the organising of a festival perse. There's a depth versus shallowness thing going on there and I guess it's like you said about the Bruce McLean a seemingly simple work once you start working with it turns out to have all sorts of complexity and nuances that you need to spend time with.

When I was in London I would have sat with documentation of a whole lot of different Expanded Cinema works because around the early 2000s artists like Guy Sherwin and Malcolm Le Grice started performing things again that they hadn't been performing since the 70s and until then there was no documentation of something like *Man With Mirror*. Guy Sherwin says that a U-matic tape was made in the 80s documenting him performing it but I have not seen it and it's not in the archives anywhere. I don't know...maybe he has it sitting in a box somewhere. Mark Webber, he was incidentally the base player for a British pop band called *Blur*, became a very passionate, enthusiastic film curator who, like me, was interested in reaching back to those works from the 1970s and contacting originating artists. Being located in London, and most of those artists being in the UK, he was in a position to invite them to come and perform works of their own that they hadn't performed publicly for a long time.

So in a way you could argue that those artists were re-enacting their own works again after a gap of many years – like a kind of re-enactment, like a re-visitation. You realise after all this time has passed a lot has changed. In the case of *Man With Mirror*, Guy Sherwin says that it wasn't until all the time had passed and he re-presented the work that a core part of what we see now became visible which is the aging of his own body. So when he performed the work in the 70s the aging of his face was not visible. With a gap of twenty-five years it does become visible and all of a sudden the work shifts and becomes something else.

You still haven't told me how you actually made contact with Guy Sherwin. He came to your attention but how did you approach him?

Oh I would have been in the LUX or in the Central St Martins archive speaking to...there were a few key people in there. Stephen Ball is in the Central St Martins and a fellow called Mike Spurlinger at the LUX and I would have shared my interest with them and they would have given me his phone number...something like that. It was only after looking at the video

documentation of the performances that he did in the early 2000s that I would have thought it was worth contacting him. There were other artists that I was looking at but I haven't ever gotten around to contacting them.

So you liked the shift in the meaning of Guy's work brought about by natural aging when he began performing the work again in the 2000s?

Well there's something about...

In comparison with what was on the original film?

Yes of course. I mean I just considered it was an essential part of the work itself...

Does it therefore become more about life and death?

I don't know, it could be but that's not what I was thinking of at the time.

It seems to me that there is a relationship between *Man With Mirror* and the effect of the artist aging over time and Christian Boltanski who is being surveilled by CCTV cameras in order to make a portrait about his gradual demise [*The Life of C.B.*]. Both are mirrors of life and the other. Isn't Sherwin illuminating a fragment of his gradual demise.

Yes I think so. You could call it a demise mmm...you could say that a bottle of wine that has been set aside for ten years is on its way to its demise but before it gets there it gets better doesn't it? If it's got inherent quality to begin with that is. If it's a dud bottle of wine then it just gets worse. But something like *Man With Mirror* requires that passing of time in order to actually fulfil itself – to come into being. I guess the point I'm trying to make is that when I first came across this work I would never have thought about that kind of stuff. I guess I would have thought that there was a certain kind of poignancy to the age gap and I remember writing about that very briefly in an article I wrote in 2005 for *Real Time Magazine*, which you might have seen...something to do with that gap. That piece of writing is quoted in the users manual and I believe that Guy Sherwin has also quoted that himself when he's performed *Man With Mirror*, when he's needed some program notes for a public presentation or something like that.

But I guess that the key thing that I found...you know like I was trying to get to why Bruce McLean...what was it about this Bruce McLean work that 'demanded' that it had to be further studied. It's that gap between the seeming simplicity of the ingredients and the method of execution, which is purely procedural. *Man With Mirror* exists as a series of instructions that can be executed by anybody. The gap that exists between what seems simple, and the magical nature of the live experience is important - even the documentary experience of the work from a visual point of view. So you do these really simple things but you end up with this completely magical bizarre result that is befuddling and beguiling and draws you in. The simplicity is in contrast with say James Cameron's, *Avatar* or Peter Jackson's, *Lord of the Rings*. These too are amazing and beguiling but the means of production is so complex that the magic doesn't have that same kind of gap between.

So we're talking about the magic in what appears to be the simplest gesture. Just as walking under a tree and holding a mirror is a simple act.

Yes. That's right. So there's poetry in that in the same way there is poetry in the work of someone like Richard Brautigan who uses ordinary words but somehow manages to piece them

together in a particular way that produces something magical. It is that simplicity in the means of production. There's a certain economy. *Man With Mirror* cost almost nothing to make but it has a very powerful visual, experiential, impact, whereas *Lord of the Rings* cost millions of dollars to achieve something that's also magical but in a different way. They are obviously completely different works in terms of their narrative and their purpose for being and that's what would have drawn me to that work. And there are other works of Expanded Cinema that I have been drawn to in terms of doing further research into them and also re-enacting them in some way. And that [inherent simplicity] seems to be a common factor, simplicity and economy of means versus complexity.

When you spoke to Guy how did you broach the subject of re-presenting the work? Did you even know at that point that you wanted to re-present the work?

Not really. When I was in Adelaide in 2002, I had conducted a performance of a Fluxus work by Albert Fine called *Flux Orchestra for Twenty-four Performers*. The score of that was in the archives of the Experimental Art Foundation. So with twenty-four local people in Adelaide I staged that. I don't really think you could call it a re-enactment because Albert Fine left behind the score so it's like...

A script?

Getting hold of a Beethoven musical score or a Shakespeare script and getting a bunch of actors together. But having staged Albert Fine's Fluxus performance it gave me a kind of clue about the idea. I was very excited about this idea, that I was able to make a direct connection to my artistic predecessors. That connection was mediated by these scores that were held in collections rather than having to get works out of museum collections or have them mediated by authority figures. It was as if the originating artist had actually left behind a set of instructions that the next generation could pick up and work with. That was almost permission in its own right. That's what got me thinking that these works of Expanded Cinema could be treated in a similar way, not that any of the works that I'm aware of or that I've worked with were laid down in such formalised scores as Fluxus performances. You know George Maciunas (1931-1978) had that kind of influence on a whole sphere of people and got them to score works that otherwise might not have been turned into scores. Creating a sort of poetry, a way of making a commodity of ephemeral performance works.

I was kind of borrowing from that notion when I started thinking about doing it with Expanded Cinema works but I wouldn't have broached it with Guy Sherwin until I felt confident a little bit further down the track. So it would have been on my second visit. As to when that might have been perhaps 2007. Late 2007 I visited London again and I would have gone and had a cup of tea with Guy and brought up the idea with him then. It wasn't until 2009 that we actually did our re-enactment of *Man With Mirror*.

What did he think of the idea?

He thought it was a great idea.

Immediately?

Yes. It's partly his character. He's very open and generous in his way of working. I mean he has a whole aspect of his own practice now – when he tours and does a film performance night he often collaborates with local sound artists on live works where he has no idea what the

outcome is going to be. He is quite open to those kinds of chance elements and he hasn't ever been proprietorial about the intellectual property side of things. But on the other hand I guess it took between my first meeting with him probably late 2003-2004 and 2007 to propose the idea to him. My own artistic practice really developed a lot so by the time I visited him in 2007 I would have had various of my own works to show him that in a way you could say established my credentials. I know myself I get younger artists or students approaching me. I'm usually very generous with talking to them about my work but you know we're busy people and you've always got one eye on the situation to work out how much energy to put into that kind of interaction. And that is partly about working out whether they are genuine, whether this is a genuine enquiry or whether this is something that is going to be...

#### Time wasting?

Yes. I had done a project called *Bilateral Petersham* [the main case study Ihlein used in his PhD], which is about doing a residency in my own neighbourhood and writing a blog about it. I produced a book as a result of that which I gave to Guy and he read it and loved it. It had nothing to do with film. He has talked about that with me several times since. He really enjoyed that project and the document that came from it. I guess the other thing about that approach and the suggestion about doing the re-enactment of *Man With Mirror* was that there are different angles that we could have come at it from if we were in the 80s in a different kind of cultural context. I could have just gone ahead and done it and it would have been a work of appropriation art. I could have fucked it up and done something different to it and you know not cared at all about the authorship of the originating artist. In fact you might have thought all that kind of author stuff needs to be debunked but that's never been my particular approach. And partly, I guess, my approach is connected to intergenerational learning and developing that kind of relationship in an exchange or something like that, rather than this idea of a rip off or a cover version or a re-make in the appropriation sense. And those kinds of things I guess mean that there is a certain degree of respect for the originating artist that comes across in the way that I talk about the work.

#### When did Louise come into the equation?

Louise was doing her own kind of re-enactment around the same time. Louise in 2003, or maybe a little bit earlier, was involved in setting up a group called the Sydney Moving Image Coalition (SMIC) and that was originally a Super 8 filmmakers and film lovers group and a lot of the activities of the group were around encouraging people to shoot and show Super 8 films so it was like a film club. Louise is a great enabler of that sort of thing. So she has a whole bunch of Super 8 cameras, she's got the know how, so If you showed any interest she would set you up with a little kit send you on your way and say next month we will show your film. So that's the kind of club it was. And I was working with Squat Space, an artist group that I belong to. Each year we would have, at the same time as Tropfest, a film night called SQUATfest, which is the anti-Tropfest. Louise heard about that because we showed a lot of Super 8 films in the early days because that was one of my interests too. Louise somehow got wind of that, I think through a curator called Blair French, a New Zealand curator who was working in Performance Space who got in touch with me and I went along to one of the SMIC events, a film screening at Tap Gallery in Sydney. I really enjoyed it and Louise and I got talking and you know connected up. It was very exciting. Shortly after that I went off on my first trip to London and I told her that I was probably going to visit all the archives in London and she had been doing her masters at COFA about Expanded Cinema.

What exactly is Expanded Cinema?

Well it's a...you could think of it as, if experimental film involves playing around with what goes on inside the frame of the celluloid film or the video frame, Expanded Cinema takes that idea but also incorporates the screening event and the architectural space where the film event is actually taking place and the social situation of the screening itself. It brings those things into the frame. So a whole lot of...its never been a formalised movement as such, but there were people in the late 60s and early 70s doing what was called Expanded Cinema in Germany, Austria, England, America and Japan and probably other places but they are the main ones. And how it manifested itself in those different countries was quite diverse. In America it was perhaps a bit more about psychedelic, light shows and multiscreen projections that were more a part of the ambient setting of a party environment. But there were also people like Stan Vanderbeek who used Expanded Cinema events as...almost like a prototype of what he hoped an Internet culture would be. Where there were many different screens all operating at once in a kind of environment where you as the viewer were actively selecting what to look at rather than a single screen. Whereas the culture of the London Filmmakers Coop came much more from structuralist, materialist film which was about drawing attention to the apparatus of film both the mechanical apparatus and the social and cultural apparatus, those forces that shape how we see the world through the technology of film and in an iconoclastic debunking of the spectacle of the cinema. A lot of the works from the London Coop do draw attention to the projector, do draw attention to the celluloid film itself in a kind of quite thoughtful way rather than taking those things for granted and using them to create a spectacle.

So going back to you and Louise, would you say it was Super 8 that became the common denominator for you?

That was what we initially connected on yes. I'd been making a lot of Super 8 films at the time and that continues to be her medium of choice.

You were both excited about the connection and then you went off to London.

I did, I went off to London and Montreal and met some of these people and while I was away Louise continued with the SMIC and organised various screening events some of which were re-enactments. The first Expanded Cinema, re-enactments were staged by Louise in my absence. Things like Valie Export's (1940- ) *Ping Pong* (1968) and a work by Takehisa Kosugi (1938- ) a Japanese artist, who actually cuts the screen. These early experiments, including some of the ones that Louise and I did when I got back from overseas were pretty rough and ready and some of them failed to have the impact that we hoped based on what we anticipated from seeing documentation of the work. This gave us the sense that even though the works seemed quite simple they rewarded deeper application of attention. As time goes on it seems to take us longer and longer to work on just one individual work.

In the last few minutes that we have I want to focus on your re-presentation of the actual work. What were the other differences...you are now a man and a woman performing the work together. You have two Super 8 projectors, two people, two mirrors, and a mirroring pattern of movements. What other difference were there?

They are the main physical differences and that came about because Louise and I were working on it together. The work is called *Man With Mirror* so there comes a moment when we say who gets to be the performer...I'm the man so it's me and she said fuck that we're both doing it! So in the doing of it is where you find stuff out so why restrict ourselves to just one of us



doing it. If we look at *Man With Mirror* or Dziga Vertov's (1896-1954) *Man With a Movie Camera*, 1929, and let's say we give them the benefit of the doubt that when they say man they were meaning human rather than just blokes, so therefore whether it's a woman performing it or a man performing it is not part of the DNA of the work. It just happens to have been because Guy Sherwin himself was the artist and he was a man. We kind of blow away any gender-based objection to the idea of Louise performing the work because we did not see that as significant. And then at a certain point since we were both doing it, I don't know when the idea came up, we thought we could perform at the same time. Which leads to a range of other transformations that are not in Guy Sherwin's work. For example...well there's various ways you could perform at the same time. You could be standing side by side, but the work seems to logically progress to the idea that if we are talking about mirroring that the two performers can mirror each other in the room.

So that means you are performing opposite each other.

We are opposite each other, facing each other, and performing for each other in some way. The audience then gathers around us in the round. It's much more like a tennis audience than a cinema audience. Guy Sherwin's work still has a frontality about it. That's a big difference between...

You are looking at her and she's looking back at you.  
So the gaze...there's that tennis match you were talking about.

Yes from the audience point of view, because they tend to gather on the sides of the room they are looking backwards and forwards between the two performers. And then there's other things not part of our expectations in carrying out the work but which come back as feedback from audience members. And this is a big transformation from Guy's original. *(Wo)man With Mirror* has been, in the experience of men, the relationship between a man and a woman and whether or not Louise and I are in a relationship is a question that audiences ask themselves. But maybe that's not that important. The fact is that there is a man and a woman – the performers themselves could swap around. And the relationship between these two people is part of the theme of the work I suppose.

Did your audience go to that point?

Yes.

They presumed that you must be in a relationship if you are performing in this way?

Some posited that. We're not in a relationship, but I mean we are in the sense that we collaborate closely together. But just as in the theatre, people who are not in a relationship act as if they are in a relationship and they perfectly perform concepts that do relate to the real life relationships of people. It's not really that significant, but more to the point, something that we hadn't intended rushed into the work as a kind of content as a result of us just wanting to work well together. I guess the series of steps were:

STEP ONE, Louise saying I'm going to be performing this as well as you.

STEP TWO, we might as well perform at the same time.

STEP THREE, the work seems to make sense with us facing each other and performing at the same time therefore mirroring each other.

When you actually go and carry that out the audience members seem to come back and say this work has something to do with the relationship between men and women. Which was

never our intention and we have never experienced the work as audience members so we have to take their word for it. And I think this is similar in a way to what is going on with Guy Sherwin when he did that work in 1976. He never intended the work to be a poignant, poetic meditation on aging but that is what it has become. But he has to accept that, which he does happily.

Did Guy see your work?

He did. We went to London and performed it last June [2013] and he came along to the performance. We organised a screening event and it was great.

So you were both there performing...just as you did it in Australia. What did he think? What was his feedback?

He really enjoyed it and he was kind of...we had a special event where we did the performance of the work and a whole bunch of people from the London experimental film scene came along. So it was a great honour to do that and to bring the work back to Guy because he is the only person in the world, up to that point, who had never seen it. It was the first time he had ever seen the work, although it wasn't the same work, it can never be. He observed us doing it and through observing us he realised certain things about his own performance of the work. He commented that we perform the work more vigorously than he did. That his performance of it was slower and we ourselves had come to that realisation as well and kind of noticed that about ourselves that it tended to be our way of doing things.

Our physical execution of it was different – not to say that one is better or worse. Guy's partner Lynn Loo, who is also a filmmaker and sometime collaborator with Guy attended. Her insights were useful, because she has seen Guy perform it so many times and so here she was seeing it performed in a different way. Two people performing simultaneously, in the round, she felt was a real addition to the work that enhanced it. So the feedback was positive. We had a discussion panel afterwards. Guy was there on the panel and also a couple of film theorists, curators and filmmakers. The work itself only goes for ten minutes but the discussion went for an hour and a bit afterwards. A lot of people had a lot of things to say. One thing is the experience of the work and another is the idea of re-enacting as an approach to revisiting stuff from the past as well as a method of archiving in a way.

This gets us to your terminology – experiential archivist.

Louise is an archivist by trade actually. So you can ask her more question about that if you like. So that's always a kind of undertone in what we do. The problems that I have encountered ever since I was an undergraduate student have often involved carrying out a work and somebody saying that it looks a little bit like XYZ from 1969. Then I say how am I supposed to know about that and then going and digging stuff up and scratching my head and going...this looks really amazing...I need to find out more. With works that are ephemeral, performative or site specific...it's quite difficult to access such works in terms of historical deposits that are available. As a result of experiencing such works my impulse has often been to make historical deposits so the next generation that comes along can build on that. So that's my impulse but Louise also comes at it from an archiving perspective more professionally which is to do with film and video formats and decay over time. What do you need to do to keep them alive? If you have to transfer a format from one medium or material to another, what's the best practice in doing that? Are there essential qualities of a particular film or video format that in the process of transfer might be lost?

What you are telling me about is related to functionality not the experiential.

OK so experiential. It makes sense to say the difference between when I go to London and I visit the British Artists Film and Video Collection the archives consist of plan drawers and filing cabinets with papers in them and some video documents and stuff like that. Obviously going through archives in that way is an experience, as experiential as anything else. But if you can access a work through an embodied experience in time and space like you can access (*Wo*) *man With Mirror* the way we perform it, it gives you a different kind of access to that archival material. Not saying that one is better or worse than the other it's just that this experiential archive that we try to generate has up to now, been less available.

How old are you Lucas?

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I ask simply because you made a comment somewhere about 'when Guy Sherwin is too old to perform this work.' Well he is about eight years younger than I am.

He's about 65 I think.

And I'm 69. When do you draw the line that an artist cannot perform or make work?

We....ll. OK.

Physical infirmity?

This work is very physical. It's very physical. The mirror itself weighs a lot.

So I was going to challenge you for saying Guy Sherwin was 'getting old'.

He is actually a very fit fellow. Louise and I perform with different size mirrors. That's another change that we have made.

Are they smaller or larger mirrors?

My mirror is the same size as Guy's, which is 24 x 32 inches [61 x 81.3 cm] I think, the sizes are in the users manual. So what we worked out was that I am more or less the same height as Guy so my wingspan is pretty much the same as his and he works with a mirror of a certain size. Louise is quite a bit shorter than me so her wingspan is smaller so we scaled down proportionally the size of mirror she performs with. So we are already taking into consideration the needs of the body. So at a certain point Guy will find it more difficult to perform with this heavy mirror. His hypothesis about us performing more vigorously may already be part of that, like the idea of slowing things down as a sustainability strategy. He made a joke in London that since Louise works with a smaller mirror maybe he should start working with a smaller mirror so when he gets really old he can work with a mirror the size of a postcard. So that might be a way of keeping the work going. But the whole idea of when Guy's too old to perform, when he drops off the perch, it's a provocation you know. That's one of the factors that propels us – overlapping generationally. Let's say his work was initiated in 1976 and it really came into its own in 2000. We initiated our work in 2009 and perhaps it will be in 2035 that the work really comes into its own by which stage probably Guy won't be performing it anymore. But we also have in our timeline the plan to have trained Guy's son or daughter or even our own children.

So the work carries on even when Louise and I get too old to perform it. So it's kept alive... like an oral history tradition.

Why do you think re-presentation is becoming more prominent now?

That's a good question. There's been a lot of work in re-presentation, re-enactment and re-creation and so on.

Even though criticism remains about the practice it seems to be lessening and artists like you and Louise are pushing forward and audiences and curators are interested in re-presentation internationally. Is there some unexplained need to perform someone else's work?

I quote people like Marina Abramovic (1946- ) and her... *13 Rooms* re-enactment.<sup>7</sup> You could cynically argue it's to do with the recuperation by the art market of an activity that in its original moment was attempting to be anti-commodity. And as its practitioners age and mellow the fact that they didn't leave behind traces and didn't make it into a marketable product is somewhat alarming to them. Which means that maybe they are a bit more amenable that the work comes back packaged up in some way.

But do you think they're the people driving it? I'm not sure that they are the people driving the renewed interest. The work will still remain ephemeral and therefore there is a high probability that this will not excite the art market as a purchasable commodity.

I'm not an expert on the art market so whenever I say something like that I always open up a can of worms that I can't shut [both laugh]. I always think why is anything? And the answer is because it's useful to somebody. I've listed a whole lot of reasons why I find it a useful format myself and those reasons are to do with access. My reasons are critical of the inflection from an art historical perspective. New insights are generated about works that could not have been generated otherwise.

What about the fact you touched on earlier that you made a work and your lecturer said that the work looked like a work by XYZ from 1969. Don't we all borrow from the history of ideas? And sometimes we are not necessarily aware. I remember making a work in the form of a string mop. My supervisor said, 'Oh Joseph Beuys'. I was unaware of that particular work by Beuys. What it meant however was that I had, through a totally different route, and at a different time, come to the same moment as Beuys. The journeys were completely different, the timing was different but we just happened to coincide for that moment.

I'm not someone who has ever been that concerned about originality. I agree with you that things are in the air and you carry them out, somebody else carries it out and all of a sudden it seems like an amazing coincidence... So the key is to not think that that's a reason to stop using your mop it's just that it adds another layer to the mop work. And it's also one way of actually doing research in a different way rather than carefully sifting through every art historical record before you choose to do anything. Just jump in feet first and do something and then find out afterwards.

Now that sounds like both of us [laughter].

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<sup>7</sup> *13 Rooms*, Kaldor Public Art Projects, 11-21 April 2013, Pier 2/3, Hickson Road, Walsh Bay, Sydney, AUS.

## Rebecca SHANAHAN

Born 1963 New Zealand, based in Sydney since 1988

The interview with Rebecca Shanahan took place on 16 October 2013 at the National Art School where Shanahan lectures in the Photography Department. In 2012 the artist made a work titled *Neighbours*, a work that became relevant to my research project. The interview with Shanahan was recorded.

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We began with a brief conversation about the similarities that exist between Shanahan's *Neighbours* and my *Walking the Dog (and other things)* and *Coming and Going*. These moving image works depict a particular place at a particular time along with the cast of people who naturally inhabit the particular place.

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In 2012 you made a work called *Neighbours*, which incorporates photography, video and installation. What was the stimulus for the work and how did it develop?

It came out of my interest in the liminal zone between interiority and exteriority. *Neighbours*, 2012, actually came out of a body of work called *Small Hours* 2012 which is all about me looking at interiority and exteriority and working the liminal zone between interiority and exteriority through windows and doorways and reflections and looking at the domestic interior space and the public exterior space in particular. When I was making that work I was at home with small children...and so I was at home all the time...ALL the time. It was born partly of necessity. I went from being somebody who had been out in the world making work to somebody who, if I was going to keep making work, had to make it in the home while my children were asleep. So that kind of set the parameters very clearly and once those parameters had been set my interest in interiority and exteriority and the public private overlaps became the dominant thing that I was examining.

Um...and then I was walking home one night from the railways station on a warm Sydney evening and there were a lot of doorways open and I looked into them, as I always do. I realized that that was a continuation of what I had been doing but this time it was other people's interior spaces and I was in the public space looking into the domestic space through their unconscious staging of their interior space by leaving the lights on and the door open. Previously in my work I'd been inside my own home looking out and now I was outside other people's homes looking in, so it was a kind of natural relationship between the work I'd been making which was still and moving image and these doorways that I was seeing.

I went home and grabbed my camera and started photographing but I didn't like what I was doing. I immediately, from the moment I stepped onto the street, encountered that thing that everybody with a camera encounters on the street; you have to negotiate the politics and the cultural implications of being a street photographer.

Do you mean people not reacting well to you, not accepting what you were doing, or wanting to know what you were doing?

I was very furtive because it's a pervy thing to do...so I was being very furtive and I didn't want to be furtive because it meant that my photographs would be (a) furtive and (b) boring. But I

did want to continue and I felt ethically and legally what I was doing was OK because I teach and I have to be able to inform students of what is legal and not when they are photographing in public places. I also felt because of the last few years since 9/11, photography in public places has become a fairly contested activity and the general population has become highly sensitized to the presence of a person with a camera in a public place despite the fact that they will accept surveillance cameras and despite the fact that they are entirely comfortable with being surveilled by institutions.

And they don't know where that information is going?

They don't care, it's institutionalised and because it's not personalised that seems to make it OK.

I went to a surveillance conference at Sydney University...I think...at the beginning of last year. I delivered a paper there which was about this work in progress and that was just riveting. It was very interesting having my work critiqued by security experts [laughing] but for me there were two things that I took away from that conference. There were lawyers in my audience saying, 'you're not allowed to do that. That's against the law.' So there were lawyers in the audience who didn't know the law. So I had lawyers coming over all legal on me in an area of the law they clearly didn't know at all and they didn't believe me when I corrected them about what the law was. So even the lawyers in the audience were nervous about somebody in the street with a camera, an individual in the street with a camera...so that was something really interesting that I brought away from that conference.

The other thing that I brought away from that conference was the understanding from the various papers presented that there had been a really profound shift in people's perceptions of surveillance, away from mistrust and towards acceptance. Over and over again I heard (it was an interdisciplinary conference) so I heard papers delivered by all sorts of people, from industry, from academia, from the arts, from outside the arts, and what these various people from various sectors of industry were saying was that people no longer cared about being surveilled and people were accepting of it and thought it was for the public good to be surveilled. They perceived it, as reducing crime and making themselves feel safer.

Like the Jill Maher murder case?

Exactly! And that whole story totally haunted me because it was going on around this time as well. I've actually got screen snaps of that surveillance...of those images...I'm shivering now when I think about it...so that sort of suggested to me that there had been a really profound shift in the way that people perceived public and private. There are people in England with surveillance cameras bolted to their front windows, cameras that are actually on private property pointing out from front windows. And the property owners have agreed to that because they believe it makes the street safer. So the institutions have taken the imaging equipment inside private homes and they're basically surveilling the street from inside these homes.

There are also examples of people with surveillance cameras on their property focused intrusively into the neighbour's property without permission.

That's right...that's right. It's very interesting. So again you know because I've been thinking about public and private and the relationship between public space and private space I was very interested in this kind of shift in what people perceived as public and private.



Also because I guess I'm trained in photography and I have access to that long legacy of street photography done by the, quote unquote, masters of street photography like Cartier-Bresson and Lee Friedlander, I believe very strongly in the right of photographers to inhabit the streets and image their culture and image their experience. So I felt very strongly that I was allowed to do this even though I felt uncomfortable and pervy. I also felt very strongly at the same time that it was a valid, worthwhile project and I felt ethically OK about doing that.

I was also running a street photography project with my students at the time and we were training them to manage to do their project without being hassled all the time and I was getting really cranky about the way my students were being hassled for being dopey eighteen year olds with cameras. You know, going around finding the world to be an interesting place when seen through the viewfinder. So I felt very strongly that I wanted to do that for all of those peripheral sorts of reasons.

The solution to me taking bad photographs and feeling like a perv, was to bolt my camera to my bike and make video instead.

Where was the camera?

Bolted to my handlebars and it was facing off to the left. So I would walk my bike or ride my bike...

So that's why we could see your shadow from time to time.

That's right. That's right...yes...I was either riding my bike slowly or wheeling my bike slowly. Which seemed to make me entirely invisible. I was no longer that person caught in the throes of lifting my camera to my eye and taking a photograph.

You were very close to some people did they not speak to you?

They didn't speak to me and I didn't speak to them because I wanted to keep the diegetic sound in the shot so I didn't want to say, 'good day'. But you know I looked sort of friendly and I also think, and some of the people who have seen this work have said the same thing, that if I had been a man doing that I wouldn't have got away with it and I do think there is something in that.

Were you focused on moving forward and therefore not having any eye contact with the people?

If it was logical to have eye contact I had eye contact. You know we would glance at each other. If it wasn't logical to have eye contact because we were too far away or they were talking to somebody then I didn't have eye contact. As far as I was concerned I was a neighbour walking down the street or riding down the street, I just happened to have a camera bolted to my bike.

Maybe they didn't register that.

No a lot of the time I don't think they did register that. I don't remember anyone ever glancing at my camera. I was never stopped and I was never asked what I was doing. Although I actually cased a couple of doorways – I'd go past and go, 'ooh that looks good' and I'd go back and case it for a bit. Nobody ever asked what I was doing.

The second part, or another dimension to this project is indirect. While the influence is

indirect, to me it is actually quite key to this project and also to subsequent projects. I think it's not just surveillance that is driving our sort of re-negotiated conception of private and public space. It seems to me that it is social media and Facebook. For me this project was as much informed by Facebook as it was by anything else. I live in a very young neighbourhood because I live near the University of Sydney and most of my neighbours are students renting. Not all but most. A lot of them are academics but what I noticed over and over again was that the doorways that were open were the doors of the shared houses where students lived. So in other words the people leaving their doors open were a young demographic, they're the Facebook generation and I really think that a twenty-something's perception of public and private has changed and shifted.

But it was also hot...

Yes it was boiling hot it was a heatwave.

Maybe they feel less self-conscious about it.

That's right they were completely unselfconscious about it and they were completely uninhibited about not modifying their living room behaviour because the door was open and the light was on inside. So everything they would normally do in their living room they continued to do and because it was a heatwave they were um wearing very few clothes and they were just lolling around in a heat wave going, '...(f)uck its hot' it was just like that.

I think you captured a couple about to kiss.

I captured a lot more than that and edited it out. I captured a couple in the throes of sex but I didn't use it because I didn't want that to be the focus. It only lasted for a second or two so I thought I could probably put it in and not notice it but I just didn't want to go there I just didn't want to do that. There was plenty of other stuff going on that I found more interesting to be honest so that was sort of less interesting to me and I didn't want it to turn into a work that everyone talked about for just that one second of people having sex so I took it out and I didn't want to look at it again.

So yes they are of a generation that is particularly uninhibited, and yes it was freaking hot it was a heatwave that lasted for a week, which was great so it meant that I could go out every night for a week and collect footage. So I had a really great window. Every night as soon as it got dark until about 2.00 o'clock in the morning I was out riding around my neighbourhood and going backwards and forwards and around and around collecting footage. As soon as my card was full I'd either swap it over and go back and upload or after a couple of hours both my cards would be full and I'd just go back and upload and then go out again because I was in my own neighbourhood I was within a kilometre of my own home the whole time. I know all of those streets really well.

At that time, 2.00am, were you anxious?

Oh no not at all I've never felt anxious in my neighbourhood and I'm very confident at night on the streets anyway, I always have been. I've always been out and about. And also on a bike you can ride away from anything.

Although when you went past the park where people were sitting, talking and drinking, I suddenly became anxious.

Oh that's interesting...you sort of thought some narrative was about to happen.

It seemed to me that everything was going so perfectly that this might be an area where something untoward happens.

No that's my local park where my kids play and those were just bunches of students whose houses were so damn hot they'd gone to the park to get some relief from the heat...also I do think that when you are in motion you are a lot safer than when you are immobile. I have been cased whilst photographing in my area using a tripod. I've felt someone behind me and I've realized they've been casing me to see if they can take my camera.

Wanting to steal it?

Yes...because there are disadvantaged groups of people in my neighbourhood...it is not an exclusively middle class neighbourhood. There are large areas of disadvantage in my neighbourhood and there's a high level of street crime and there's a high level of property crime. But at the same time I have lived there for a really long time and I know the area really well and I feel very comfortable in that area. But I have been, especially when I was working with a 4 x 5 camera with my head under the dark cloth at night. I've been cased a couple of times. And so one reason I gave up working in that way was because after I had children I didn't have my husband to come with me and just hang around and read a book or do whatever while I was photographing. He was home looking after the children. I needed somebody there regularly and eventually all my friends got sick of me asking them to come out with me. But no there was never a safety issue [shooting *Neighbours*] and there has been no sense of danger for me at all. It was just me doing what I've always done...which was being out photographing.

But I did feel very strongly, just getting back to the Facebook thing, I did feel very strongly that what I was witnessing was a shift in the sense of privacy by a generation that had grown up on social media and nothing...nothing I image of them could come close to being as ... um...what's the word, over-disclosing, as anything they could post for themselves because for me social media is all about self surveillance. Social media as a version of self surveillance comes up over and over again when I find myself talking to artists and to students who are in their 20s and 30s. They are living with photography in a way that I never did at that age. They are self-surveilling in a way that I never dreamed and they are under extreme pressure, although most of them, unlike me, are much more clued in and more able to read images and to deconstruct images and understand what images may or may not mean. I think when they're teenagers they're very vulnerable to pressure but I think by the time they're in their 20s they've got it sorted. But it just meant that I had this whole neighbourhood of people for whose private domestic space was accessible to the public eye. So that became the work.

It's also a documentary about a neighbourhood that's changing quite fast. There's a real documentary component to it and like you not knowing what you were going to get from your footage [referring to my collection of data using a fixed position CCTV camera and my concern about who would walk by or if anyone would walk by] I didn't consider the documentary dimension of this project until I began to edit it and then I realized I had a documentary about a certain place at a certain time and so in 30 years time people will say... that's what rubbish bins looked like back then and that's how people behaved in a heat wave and that's the kind of conversations people had at parties.

In my work [*Coming and Going* and *Walking the Dog (and other things)*] when there was nothing

going on, no human movement in the street, you could see the scars from the changes that have been made in the seventy-five years of the suburb's history. You tend not to look at the scars when someone is walking down the street but if there is nothing else going on then the scars become visible.

That's right, it's that framing thing, it's that framing thing... so that's how it came about

Neighbours, is an insightful work and the mood created draws the spectator in, and not merely for the voyeuristic dimension. The work is edited so what did you edit out?

Repetition because in order to collect the kind of stuff I was interested in, I had to ride the same streets over and over again, past...

Past the same houses? I thought I was seeing houses perhaps more than once.

And that became a kind of motif, particular repetition, because there's one guy in my neighbourhood who sits in the same place on the sofa every night and watches TV and over a week that's all he did. In the end I used that footage. It looks like identical footage but its shot over seven different nights, but I used him over and over again because he was like a statue that I kept riding past. It was hilarious.

There's so much going on in the work, I'll have to go back and find him.

You'll see him – I think it was a pale grey sofa. Another reason I did that was because again it was embedding the sense of neighbourliness, this is my neighbourhood, this is my banal routine, these are streets I go down all the time, these are people that I see all the time. I'm not like an outsider looking in at a group of strangers and observing them in a kind of ethnographic way it's like the quotidian daily rituals. This became a quotidian ritual for me over that week every evening that's what I did I strapped up my bike and I went out so the repetition was part of that.

I shot as usual a whole lot more footage than I ended up using and as I went out things started popping up. Again, like you, I hadn't intended to put the footage of my shadow in the work but that ended up being quite significant for me and that's something I hadn't even known I was collecting at the time. But again when I was reviewing the footage and editing it that became another motif.

I edited for intimacy because early in that week-long heat wave I started out riding down the road as one does on a bike, but I was too far away, so I ended up riding on the footpath and then I ended up walking a bit too so I could slow it down. So I'd walked my bike past doorways rather than riding past doorways. I refined my techniques as I was going along...because that was only the second video that I'd ever made so I was learning to make video. I realised...oh I have a camera that makes movies...oh I should make movies it was as simple as that. Going from the 4 x 5 film camera tradition to the digital SLR camera was a huge leap for me because I'd printed digitally since the mid 90s but I hadn't worked with a digital camera until a couple of years before I made that work. And I was an idiot I didn't realize I could shoot movies on it [laughing]. For the first year I was working with it I was just skilling up and transferring my skills over from 4 x 5 film onto digital. I was learning all the menus and testing stuff, I was just testing, testing, testing.

I was particularly interested in the sound and the rhythm it created for the piece.

That's just the diegetic sound. That's just completely unedited...only edited to the visuals. All I did was test levels.

The sound of your progress seems to fade in and fade out.

That's right and that was hugely enjoyable. And there was something quite meditative about hearing all the clicks of me changing gear and the bumps as I went on and off the footpath. It just became a kind of rhythm of the journeys, of the repeated journeys. I hadn't conceived of sound because I'm very much a photographer who occasionally works with moving image so I hadn't thought about sound when I was making the work. Again when I started editing I realised that the sound was very interesting...so then I started to learn to edit sound [laughs]. That was quite a steep learning curve as well...[she trails off reflectively].

And then you did something very interesting, you created a long curtain element for the installation.

Now that's at *The Substation* at the moment that curtain [the curtain element of Shanahan's installation was selected as a finalist in *The Substation Contemporary Art Prize*, Melbourne, 2013].<sup>8</sup> The *Neighbours* work was actually an installation, you have probably seen the installation views on the website. So I had a coffee table from my living room with a domestic screen on it so the whole presentation of the video was domestic, it wasn't at all art, it wasn't gallery, it was completely domestic. The gallery I showed it in was an artist run initiative called Eastern Bloc Gallery, which was an old shop. It's gone now; it got sold and redeveloped of course. Artists are always one jump ahead of the wrecking ball. It was a corner shop sort of place and it had domestic scale that was perfect for that work. Then I made the curtain using a still image printed onto a curtain and the curtain was non-domestic scale so I inverted everything. The screen was supposed to be a big cinematic work and it was this tiny domestic scale and the curtain was supposed to be a little domestic window covering and I made it absolutely enormous, it was six metres long and nearly three metres high so it was massive. I was thinking about the interface between surveillance and home, and the public use of surveillance imagery...the institutional use of surveillance imagery in a public place. And then the very personal domestic scenes it also surveils.

Is this curtain element a metaphor for concealing or veiling for you?

It's more about that kind of interstice between public and private. I've used curtains a couple of

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<sup>8</sup> I visited *The Substation Contemporary Art Prize*, Melbourne, 2013, on Tuesday 22 October, a day when it was not open to the public. Curator Will Foster provided access. Until I stood in front of Rebecca Shanahan's curtain element I did not realise that artists are only permitted to enter one element and therefore the other elements, the television set, the video and the table that completed the initial *Neighbours* installation were not eligible as part of the entry. Despite this momentary disappointment it was useful to stand in front of the curtain. What cannot be seen when viewing smaller images of the *Neighbours* curtain is the apparent randomness of the scattered fragments of other houses, vehicles, trees and road markings. These elements are lit 'accidentally' by unknown ambient sources and as they curve across the drape of the curtain they appear to be fluid, unstable, moving. Indeed the angle of the photograph creates immense ambiguity. Where is this place? This place that inspires feelings that are both familiar and unfamiliar. The effect is comforting and disquieting at the same time. Some house fragments appear to explode from the edges of the work and intermittent road markings include, coincidentally, two marked bike lanes with perfectly identifiable bike lane symbols. There is undeniable warmth inherent in the work. The softness of the fabric is suggestive of the organic, the 'feminine', and domestic privacy, elements Shanahan saw as important in the fully installed version of the work.

times. I was photographing windows a lot and on some of those windows there were curtains drawn back and in the video that went with *Small Hours* where I'd actually filmed my own curtain blowing in the wind. So the curtain was a motif I have been working with for a while as this kind of porous, moving, soft, feminine thing that comes between the public space of the street and the private space of the home. So that's my interest in the curtain and the fact that it could be drawn back or it could be closed – it was this flexible porous thing.

You have shown totally different angle here (referring to the image on the curtain).

Yes well that's taken from the angle of a surveillance camera so I went up to the top of the car park near my home. About 150 to 200 metres from my home there's a multi-story car park, and I went up to where there was a surveillance camera and I just mimicked the surveillance camera's position.

And all the furniture on the veranda shown prominently in the foreground is just what you could see on this neighbours verandah? There was no staging?

That's all I could see. I think the people from there either work at night or they're very social because I was up there a couple of nights and over both of those nights I was just looking. I wanted to reference the surveillance angle somehow but also I wanted to travel the idea of the surveillance camera because obviously, for me, it was going to be objective and it was going to be a choice rather than just angled according to the security company's instructions. I wanted to photograph from a surveillance camera's point of view the same streets that I had been filming at ground level. So I wasn't looking for that house in particular I was just looking for somewhere that would show me a domestic street from a surveillance camera's point of view. So I was up there and the lights of the house just came on and I was like, 'ooh I like that.' And then somebody drove up and drove away and I took a quick snapshot because I just had my snappy camera at that point, so I just took a quick snapshot. I went home and looked at it and thought that's just perfect how will I ever get that again! I'll have to case it for days, you know, stake it out for days and days to get it, but I'll get it because that's exactly what I've been looking for. So OK my plan was to go up every night with my tripod and my camera and just wait and hope to hell that at some stage they would turn their lights on and I'd go boom got it. So I went up there, framed it, had it all happening, I was ready to wait, and bugger me it just happened straight away and then not only did the lights stay on but they had lots of comings and goings between their car and the house. They turned their car headlights on and it was like, 'thank you so much that's completed...its done thank you so much.'

So having worked these streets at street level that was just me wanting an image from up above those streets and that just happened to be the one. I had to do quite a lot of postproduction work on the image. I had footage of that house from street level on my camera but it was not one of the houses I used in the end, I used the street but not that house.

We talk about the proscenium theatre effect of the houses in South Yarra that I walked by in the evenings when I lived in Melbourne – they had their curtains open and the lights on just like the young people in the suburban streets in Rebecca's video.

We all do that. Have you heard about the amazing work *Stranger*, 1998-2000, by a Japanese artist based in London, Shizuka Yokomizo?<sup>9</sup> It's not just the public/private interstices but

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<sup>9</sup> *Stranger*, by Shizuka Yokomizo is discussed in section 4, *Extending the Moment*, chapter 1, *The artist walks the camera into position*.



also the distance and intimacy that these situations can trigger...it's like you're standing in somebody's living room, you can see every detail but you are standing there in the dark

Display is part of it we agree.

In a wealthy area everything is deliberate, conscious. Pride in home and possessions. People will share what they are proud of if they feel safe.

Have you been at all influenced by Gregory Crewdson?

It's hard to work in any dimension of the cinematic and not have to acknowledge him. I am personally over him...I have been for years...over exposure partly. Also he represents a particular period of image making, which is expensive, sold for high prices, highly marketable and scaled for public presentation. I think the psychological dimension of what he does is marvellous. I have met him; he is a very nice man. I love his film literacy, it's a bit like Jeff Wall, you can unpick the work and see the film references and as someone working with film references herself I enjoy that. But there is something airless for me now about his work. As a photographer one is often impressed by his technique and mastery and one is deeply envious of his crew because he has a crew of hundreds and I think all of us would like the opportunity to work that way at some stage but I find his work, and a lot of work by Jeff Walls, ultimately very airless, over controlled, hermetically sealed. The work becomes stifling. I like the stillness, I'm very interested in stillness, but I wouldn't cite him as an influence. But I can't say he has not influenced me because every photographer who works now needs to understand him – but I would not cite him as an influence mainly because I always look to merge the cinematic approach with the documentary approach. I do that because I find purely cinematic work airless. What I like about the merging of the cinematic and the documentary is you can allow some spontaneity in but you can also actually make a document at the same time. You can control your image, the way artists want to control the image, but you can also contribute a document to the archive of documentary photography. So I like that relationship to the real but at the same time I like to mess with the relationship with the real.

What are your cinematic influences?

I'm leaving them behind now but mostly post-war auteur cinema and mostly Antonioni. I'm a massive fan of Antonioni and filmmakers informed by Antonioni like Claire Denis (French film director and writer). I've made a lot of work thinking about Antonioni's framing, narrative, and anti-narrative, particularly his sense of time, and a technique called *temps mort* (dead time)<sup>10</sup> where the camera is rolling before or after the actors enter the frame which gives the sense of something about to happen, a strong evocation of action but there is no action present. He has a very strong style that people talk about. His style is very declared and yet there is that documentary quality as well. He uses real streets and you get a very strong sense of place. With the film *Blow-Up*, 1966, you get a very strong sense of London from this film. Cinematic technique informs the mood of these films – a particular sense of mood and tone and sense of time.

Did you ever show your work to your neighbours?

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<sup>10</sup> These moments occur when the image continues after narrative usefulness has ended, or when the people have left the frame, leaving us with a non-anthropocentric image of the world. The 'dead time' description is in at least one sense misleading. It is not time or space which is dead. These violent primordial forces are never more alive and devastating than at such moments.

No...but it was shown in a gallery a few kilometres from there and I left a heap of invitations at my local café so again I did not seek them out but nor I was secretive about it. I just went about my usual daily life. No one has spoken to me about it so I guess it probably was not seen.

We talk generally about images displayed on Shanahan's website.<sup>11</sup>

I don't do any post-production. I prefer minimal post-production because of the documentary vein. [Looking at *Near Breath*, 2005, and within the series, a night shot of Wellington, New Zealand, which seems to have layers of houses mysteriously and curiously suspended] This was shot on film and reshot on digital and I got what I wanted on digital. Film and digital respond to light very differently. It's a matter of finding the right location. I print about 5% of what I shoot and then of the 5% I show about 5% of that. So it's shooting, shooting, shooting, then editing, editing, editing until it matches the picture I have in my head. I was in New Zealand because my father was dying and I was on Australian time so I was out and about in the streets at night because I couldn't sleep. I would go out looking for a picture and eventually I find it.

The series *Small Hours*, 2012, includes a shot that shows the city of Sydney across a park. This was the beginning of my interest in domestic space and public space, that's my neighbourhood and that's the city and it was just a matter of working out technically how to clarify that this picture was about these two types of spaces using the lighting available. People expect that I augment the light all the time but I never augment the light. Most of it is about the light...it is your tool and you need to recognize how to use it. Some of the exposures were a couple of hours long most between five and twenty minutes long. Most of it is about observing what is there and understanding how you can translate it into a photograph.

Looking at this night shot with its deep foreground shadows across the park and the distant city where theoretical safety can be found inspires in me a sense of anxiety.

It's funny that was a very unsafe park. It was the last image I made out in a public park at night by myself because I knew I wasn't safe any more. Instead of being a moving target I was a sitting target because I had a big heavy camera and a big heavy tripod and my head underneath the blanket with my bum poking out...it was kind of like, mug me...bring it on...[Shanahan laughs]. I was Interested in the strata layers, the layer of the park, the layers of the apartments, the layers of the buildings in the distance, and the city glowing like the *Emerald City* in the far background.

[Returning to the work *Neighbours*] I feel deprived because I don't have your actual work. I have the website but I don't have the work and I am not able to be in the space with the installation to see the decisions you have made, about the curtain, the size of the television set and the table.

And that's a really important part of the work the material nature. It is really important to see it because it is an installation but also a series of things...objects. I think the other danger is reproduction [referring to images of art works in books]. Reproductions were once small and black and white, and put through a dot screen so you recognised it was a reproduction. But these days people look at images on a computer screen and they think what they see is the real image. They think they are experiencing the artwork because it's colourful and backlit.

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<sup>11</sup> <<http://www.rebeccashanahan.net>>.

## Christian BOLTANSKI

Born 1944

The conversation with Christian Boltanski took place in his Malakoff studio, 5km from the centre of Paris, on 12 October 2011. The conversation was hand documented.

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We chatted as we climbed the stairs to the mezzanine level of the studio and I made the comment that I liked his recent work composed of fluorescent tubes titled, *Signatures* 2011,12 installed in a well under the Spanish museum, Es Baluard Museu d'Art Modern i Contemporani de Palma. He returned playfully, 'My work is often not seen because it is in the dark.' Before we sat down I presented Christian Boltanski with a small gift.<sup>13</sup>

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### How did *The Life of C.B.* come about?

Boltanski said he developed the idea for *The Life of C.B.* to 'perfect' his own life, meaning to make a model or exemplar with himself as central to the idea. 'David has part of my life. When I am dead he has nothing,'<sup>14</sup> he said. Through this work, commissioned in 2009, the artist sees his life as 'on loan' until such time as he dies. 'I can't imagine someone looking at me. Every moment of my life is going to be recorded – that is more beautiful to show the stages of life rather than denying changes as we do now. The work with David is like protecting my life in big boxes – we are all unique, fragile, but the memory fades.'

'David wanted a piece of me, I told him no, but I wanted to play with him. It is important to discuss the fact that we will die instead of ignoring or avoiding it – I wish not to die but it is better to see the truth – it is part of life that at one point I do not return. It is impossible to succeed in the fight against dying. You can't presume you don't have to pass on. David has my memory.'

He points to a sign about the size of a car number plate displaying the dates 1907-1989, saying the dates represent his mother's life span. 'The numbers are the beginning and end; the life is

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<sup>12</sup> *Signatures* 2011, is installed in the darkness of an ancient well below the Es Baluard Museu d'Art Modern i Contemporani de Palma in Spain.

<sup>13</sup> As the appointment with C.B. approached I felt I should present him with a small gift to thank him for his generosity. After much discussion it was decided it would be alcohol but would it be wine, champagne or...? I discussed this with a local wine merchant in St. Germaine, where I was staying. The wine merchant explained how insulting it could be if I got it wrong. He said no to champagne if I did not know the style C.B. preferred and no to wine for much the same reason. He suggested cognac. A hand made cognac in its own hand made box. When I presented the gift C.B. looked slightly confused but politely insisted on tasting the cognac. It was an awkward moment. C.B. was not sure what to do for the best, it was clear he did not want to insult me. He asked if I would like a 'glass' (in truth he only had plastic cups). I nodded to be polite. There was silence in the studio. It was absolute. Not a bird tweet, no hum of life, no creak of building. Boltanski poured a small amount of cognac into two plastic cups. I said that cognac was a bit strong for me and that I was a champagne drinker. He laughed – I think he would have preferred champagne, but what kind? He handed me a cup. As I organised myself he sipped his cognac and coughed just as I had done when the writer Richard Flanagan had pressed on me a small draught of artisan whisky that I politely sipped. C.B. said it was very strong and that he would put a little water in it. He indicated it was a bad thing to do but that if I didn't mind that was what he was going to do. He asked if I wanted some water and I said yes. I don't remember if he went on drinking, I didn't. I should have bought champagne.

<sup>14</sup> David Walsh, owner of MONA, and the work, *The Life of C.B.*

in the hyphen in the middle. I remember my mother but when I die who will remember her? My brother will also die so there is a fading of memory – a generational loss.’

During the interview he returns several times to this point – that our gradual dying should be recognised, talked about, celebrated and not pushed under the carpet or ignored. The dead should be recognised. The stages of the fading of our uniqueness should be celebrated.

Are you conscious of the presence of the cameras in your studio?

‘I forget the cameras completely.’ I question this raising the Panopticon effect where the watched are eventually driven mad. I ask if living in the gaze of the cameras will drive him mad. He says no. ‘The Life of C.B. is like a fable. The images go to a cave.’ I say that it is not a cave and he says he knows, but it is part of the mythology he seeks to build around the work, like the archive of heartbeats housed in a bunker on Teshima. Boltanski would like to see Teshima referred to as the Island of the Dead given that the heartbeats of the living will eventually become the heartbeats of the dead.<sup>15</sup>

Boltanski says he used to wave at the cameras every time he entered the studio but now he forgets the cameras and he no longer waves. ‘But David can see everything...’ He says this with a laugh. ‘He can zoom in, he can see me doing this every day [he gestures to scratch his nose] he could even read your notes.’ He laughs when I look slightly startled by the idea. ‘Wave to the camera, wave to David,’ he says. I obediently wave.

Boltanski is constantly building myths. David Walsh does not watch the footage or play any part in the receiving of the live feed and the camera has no ability to ‘zoom in’. Boltanski knows this and he knows that I know it. He enjoys creating myths and misunderstandings.

At MONA why is the work situated so far from the gallery? The bunker looks quite utilitarian and at both arrival and departure visitors do not have the ‘O’ (an iPhone-like informational device) to assist them. It seems every attempt has been made to deter the visitor from viewing the work.<sup>16</sup>

Boltanski said he wanted the bunker sited away from the gallery. He did not wish to be inside the gallery where his work would be judged against other paintings and sculpture and perhaps judged to be not so good. ‘It is not art,’ he says of his work. I say but it is art. He says, ‘You are right, but it is about the ephemeral idea and the ripples of discussion that is important not the documentation or the bunker.’ The fact that people coming and going fail to see the work inside the bunker is of no interest to him, in fact he prefers that. It is all about the discussion.

‘It is important to know the story. The idea is the important thing. The work exists through the discussion of the story – that transmission is the key. That it exists is not the important aspect. But, like *Les Archives du Coeur* the work must be ‘there’ in a physical sense somewhere,

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<sup>15</sup> This is a reference to the archive of heartbeats housed in a bunker on the island of Teshima, Japan. Teshima is a small rural island located in the Seto Inland Sea separating Honshu and Shikoku, two of Japan’s main islands. Teshima is not referred to as the *Island of the Dead* (at least not as yet) but became famous as the site of an environmental incident involving the large scale dumping of industrial waste in the 1980s. Boltanski is mythologising when he uses the term *Island of the Dead*. In time he hopes that the term will be more commonly used, creating a different meaning for the island, a more fantastical or mythological meaning related to the archive of heartbeats. The donated heartbeats belong to the living but at some future date they will become the heartbeats of the dead.

<sup>16</sup> The bunker is located by the arrival wharf at MONA at the base of the staircase to the gallery. It is unassuming and unmarked and looks like a piece of infrastructure.

but where is not important, the discussion is. I want people to forget that I made the *Les Archives du Coeur* but the discussion to go on. Eventually it will become the *Island of the Dead* a mythological place.' He grins – he likes fables and fantasy.

But people are born, I say, it is not just about death and he nods an agreement, 'It is a continual cycle.'

The archive of heartbeats, *Les Archives du Coeur*, installed in a bunker on Teshima is also an on-going serial work, which by chance, became somewhat prescient given the earthquake in 2011.

'The work in Teshima is in the most beautiful landscape I have ever seen.' I say that I read that he does not like landscape and he shrugs and smiles. 'It is very beautiful', he repeats, showing me an image of the simple bunker set against a forest, on the edge of the water. It is beautiful. 'Is this a sculpture park?' I ask. He says, 'no...each piece is so far away from the next that each is in its own individual landscape. You can see no other work nearby you must travel to it.' Clearly he is happy with this work – perhaps he feels more for this archive than he does for the work at MONA. The idea that someone must travel to see the works is important. He sees Tasmania as remote, like the island of Teshima, and that a great effort is required to travel to the destination. But he does not presume one should make the effort because the discussion of the idea is more important, for him, than the visitation to the site of the archive.

Did you think of *The Life of C.B.* or *Les Archives du Coeur* as serial works? Were you aware of the thread of seriality running through your work at the time?

He says seriality is like a 'partition', a musical score that can be played again by someone else – someone else could use the script, score or method and remake the work rather like Sol LeWitt's wall drawings. The work can be repeated over and over again. In the case of LeWitt (1928-2007), each drawing was carefully documented. The purpose of the documentation was to support the recreation of his wall drawings, by others, especially after his death. LeWitt may be dead but the work lives on and therefore the memory of LeWitt lives on.

Boltanski digresses saying he is intending to create an exhibition as a letter (where is not stated). He will actually send nothing he says. He also needs some balls – he will source them while he is there. Others will make the exhibition he says, to his direction. He is thinking aloud about the ability of the 'musical score' to be repeated but it is not entirely clear to me.

He digresses once again, and with a laugh, he tells me a story about another idea-based work, *The Reserve of Dead Swiss*, purchased by the Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain in 1992 and gifted to the Tate, UK. After the purchase the curators called a meeting with him to discuss the handling of the work, the exhibition format and care of the materials that constitute the work. 'What happens when the photographs fade?' one of the curators asked. Get new ones was his reply. 'What happens when the calico fabric on the shelves yellows?' another asked. Replace it he said. 'What if we have a smaller display space than the current size of the work? Reconfigure it to suit he replied. The group seemed frustrated. 'What exactly have we purchased they chorused?' 'An *idea*' he said.

You have said that to be an artist is to try to live with the dead in order to make them live-again. And you have said, '...we can save nothing we can make nothing live again. The battle is completely lost.'

Boltanski says his works are quite optimistic. Each day more people are born than die he says.<sup>17</sup> The disparity between births and deaths per day, forms part of the rationale for the work, *Chance*. This work was created for the 2011 Venice Biennale, curated by Jean-Hubert Martin. Boltanski tries to remember the numbers he used for *Chance* but cannot remember. Later I look on the Internet just as he did. Within the work the numbers of births and deaths across the world are displayed on huge, ever-changing, digital counters. He maintains that, 'we are constantly disappearing – we are all unique but someone else appears. Always new and always renewing.'<sup>18</sup>

Boltanski is particularly interested in the Internet especially in relation to his on-line game *Chance*, linked to the Venice Biennale work and his new project *Storage Memory*, to be launched in January 2012, less than three months away.

There is a current proliferation of CCTV cameras in our cities capturing images of people in both public and private spaces. Do you see surveillance as a positive form of social control?

Commenting on people under various forms of surveillance he says, 'it is that they exist and I see them at the same time. Like porn sites, there are lots of porn sites, where girls wave at you – you can pay and get more but I don't pay. At different times of the day different nationalities [different girls] wave at you as though you can tell the time of day by them. The girls seem to exist but do they exist? The computer is a mirror.'

You believe that memory is rehearsed as we repeat our stories and I agree, but I would say we also tell stories to reveal something of ourselves. Is that what you are doing? Are you revealing yourself or are you creating fictive memories?

We talk about memory and Proust. He says that to be alive is to die and to kill. 'We have lost our connection to the land – the recognition of the tree is now refused,' he says. I say Proust talked about the woman of the house or the maid killing chickens or ducks and plucking them – then transforming them into dishes that would then be delivered to the table. These people were intimately connected to the life and death cycle. He agrees. 'On the other hand,' he says, 'I do not like landscape and could not live in the country.' I smile at this response.

'Life is chance,' he asserts. 'The moment you are born means something. You may have been quite different if you had been born a moment earlier or later, or born a man rather than a woman [and visa versa]. The time you are born is recorded in your face, the nose of the uncle, the forehead of...and so on – my face is a puzzle of who has gone before me.'

This archiving of the self (as in *The Life of C.B.*) raises questions. Is there an element of arrogance? Is it beautiful (to see life as it is lived) or is it merely culturally significant?

'The archiving of the self is merely asking the question the same question that has no answer. The question and the asking is important and I continually ask the questions of myself.'

He briefly touches on his date of birth and the fact that his Jewish father (in Paris during the German occupation) went into hiding. His mother and father were 'separated' or divorced at the time of his birth as a subterfuge, a means of saving the father and the family capital. He

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<sup>17</sup> According to statistics quoted on the Internet, which Christian Boltanski referred to: between 358,192 and 367,000 births occur each day and between 150, 000 and 154, 889 people die each day although these figures are almost impossible to define correctly.

<sup>18</sup> On 17 October 2011, I journeyed from Paris to Venice to experience *Chance* at the Venice Biennale.



says his mother was pregnant at a time when it would have been considered normal to 'kill' the baby. But she did not. He was born by chance. Much of this early difficult life has shaped the artist's attitude to chance. 'I was given a chance when another baby might not have been given the chance,' he says.

He has the view that the baby at birth is more connected to the earth and life than the living. But as the baby ages that understanding is gradually lost – it gradually dissipates.

Boltanski says he is happier now than he has ever been and that trying to understand the fading of life is reassuring.

#### Tell me about other archive works.

With the telephone book archive works he says he wanted to name everyone in the world but as he did people died and babies were born and he realised he needed to start over and over.<sup>19</sup> He added an errata that read, *You can't call these people because they are dead* (followed by a list of names), and yet the book lived on until the next year or next publication listing numbers of people who could not be reached because they had died. For *Telephone Subscribers*, 2000, the errata read, *You can't reach these inhabitants of... wherever city... on the phone anymore. They died in 1993 (or whatever year of the publication of the telephone books).*

Catherine Grenier, in her book, *Christian Boltanski: There's a story... says you*, '...would often repeat the Tadeusz Kantor phrase 'we all carry within us a dead child, who accompanies us throughout our existence.'<sup>20</sup> Can you expand on this idea? Is there a small Christian Boltanski within?

He says, '...inside me is a little Christian. We die metaphorically many times as little bits of childhood fade. As an artist the light might be stronger [to see this].' He points to me and says inside I have a small Greer or many small Greer's that have 'passed', parts of my childhood I cannot return to.

#### Do you have any affinity with the Fluxus movement?

This avenue of enquiry lasted only moments. 'I am an expressionist, a minimalist. My spirit is expressionist. I am an artist of the C21th century not C20th. I loved Pina Bausch. Joseph Beuys was my father.' I ask for clarification about the use of 'father' and he says, 'every artist has mothers, fathers, aunts and uncles. Not blood relatives but great influencers. In that context Beuys was my father.' I say Louise Bourgeois was my mother and he nods approvingly. He says she was wonderful. He says Fluxus was important to everyone but that he saw Fluxus as a generation before him.

I tell him that before the interview, like a detective, I chased down, one by one, his works on display at MONA and in museums in Paris. In documenting the finds I instinctively set up the device where a part of me is captured in the photograph with the work – proof that I was actually there. If I am not captured in the picture, am I really there? Did I capture the image

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<sup>19</sup> *Telephone Subscribers*, 2000, is housed in the Boltanski Gallery in the basement of the Musée d'Art Moderne, de la Ville de Paris. Variations on this archive are held in national collections and repetitions of this work or representations have been exhibited widely. The archive in the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris included phone books from Adelaide (South Australia) the place of my birth, far removed from Paris.

<sup>20</sup> Grenier, C, Mendelsohn, D (interview), Radzinowicz, D (translation) 2010, *Christian Boltanski: There's a Story...*, Flammarion, S.A., Paris,

from a book and compile a fictional story about travelling to Paris? Boltanski says this becomes an extremely important device to identify his idea of *being* and what state one might be in. 'If you do not see, 'it' is not there, he says, you are not there.'

He tells me that I must see the Georg Baselitz exhibition at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris and the Munch exhibition at the Centre Pompidou.<sup>21</sup> Reference to Baselitz makes Boltanski think about the work *The Women of Dresden*, and Germany. Musing on the past he said everything was important lies, war and history. 'It may be strange but I feel more German than French today. French art is too clever, too aesthetic not enough expression.'

Can we talk about the works Catherine Grenier refers to as your 'list' works? There is a Gallery Director in Australia who says that at the heart of all contemporary art there is the list. Is that true? What best typifies your list works?<sup>22</sup>

Talking about the place of the list in art Boltanski refers to a 2009 exhibition he liked, staged at the Louvre by Umberto Eco. The exhibition was called *Mille e tre* and was based on Eco's book, *The infinity of Lists*.

His mind wanders again to Nazi Germany. 'The Fascists made no lists of names only [lists of] numbers to say a person has lived or died. In the Jewish religion they say the name of the dead. Listing of names implies knowing the person acknowledging they exist or once existed.'

He says, 'I was born a Catholic I never went into a Synagogue but somehow I sense things, I know things.' I suggest there may be a core of knowledge that is common to people without them realising. He nods in agreement.

At one point the artist got up and walked around the mezzanine catwalk that surrounds the open central workspace below bringing back two books. His book, *Kaddish*,<sup>23</sup> filled with images of deceased people, and another a more general book about his work. He flicked through the pages pausing at the large work for 'Monumenta'. I indicated that I knew the work from my research. He seemed pleased when I recognised that and other works.

As the interview drew to a natural close he looked at me saying, 'we can only communicate about what we know,' suggesting his conversation with another may be quite different but still restricted to what they both know.

He says, 'the object of art is precisely to speak of what is most individual by making it collective, so everyone can say *that's my story*.' This is important for him like the residue of memory, of living and dying, left within discarded clothes. In a museum context, he recognises residues of memory in the form of clothing, photographs and artifacts often committed to vitrines and archives as *remaining traces* – traces of his life and traces of the lives of others. In the early 70s he was already thinking about life extinguishing and asking questions about what remains and the significance inherent in what is left behind – the remaining traces – and questioning the

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<sup>21</sup> I saw both exhibitions – *Edvard Munch, l'œil moderne*, before the interview and *Baselitz as Sculptor* after. I agree with Christian Boltanski that the Baselitz exhibition was astounding especially *The Women of Dresden* and the *Self-Portraits* 2009-2010.

<sup>22</sup> Jason Smith, Director and CEO, Heide Museum of Art at the time and now Curatorial Manager, Australian Art, Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA). Smith took up the new appointment in November 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Boltanski, C 1998, *Kaddish*, Musée d'Art Moderne, de La Ville de, Paris. Portraits drawn from Boltanski's archive of portraits of deceased people. The book has over 1,600 pages.

place of these found artifacts.

He presents me with two folded posters. The images are of *Personnes* the massive work for 'Monumenta' 2010. As part of this work a crane worked constantly to lift into the air bundles of clothes from a giant pile of garments in the centre of the work. 'That is chance again', he says, 'this time it might be picked up and then not, it is all chance.' But whatever is raised in metaphorical esteem as well as height is inevitably returned unceremoniously to the pile and different bundle of clothes is elevated, an action that was infinite. And chance is at play in the on-line game, *Chance*, which Boltanski developed to run at the same time as the Venice Biennale installation *Chance*. I tell him that I play the game every day but never win. I ask him if it can be won. He laughs but does not answer.

We talk about the *after*. I say for non-believers like us – he has declared he had no religious belief – that there is nothing after death. He paused as if there might be, and then nodded in agreement saying he thought that to be the most likely scenario.

I enquired about Sophie Calle in relation to a possible interview and he indicated he Annette Messager and Sophie Calle all live in the same building. 'But I don't see Sophie Calle very often,' he says. I say it would be a dream of mine to get all three together around the dinner table. He smiles wanly. He writes down Sophie Calle's address in my notebook.<sup>24</sup>

As I prepare to leave he tells me that his problem is not being able to speak English. I replied that his English was good. He shrugged and said 'no'. Despite his apparent ease it must be acknowledged that it takes substantial effort in a language he has not yet mastered. But it must be said that he is succeeding in conversing in a second language where I cannot even attempt French. I also noticed from the very beginning that he seemed to turn his left ear to me as if he might be a little deaf in his right ear. If he does have some sort of hearing loss, and his action was consistent throughout the interview, then this makes the understanding of another language more difficult.

I gesture to the CCTV camera as I lift my camera. He nods. I take several images of the camera that has been spying on me. I look it in the eye and capture its image as I make a gestural intervention.

We walk down the stairs, out the door and into the lane. It is very overcast and the sound of evening traffic is clear. He encouraged me to contact him if I had further questions and then we said goodbye.

## Notes:

I am very grateful to Christian Boltanski for affording me the opportunity to meet with him. Both the conversation and the experience of being in his studio contributed substantially to my exegesis and also provided the platform for a small gestural intervention that would become a work in my studio. Because I had the opportunity to meet with the artist there is a liveness about my presentation of him within the exegesis that is difficult to achieve without

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<sup>24</sup> This is the address of all three. The same address I found when I spent four hours on Google one afternoon nervously trying to find out where Boltanski lived in case I arrived in Paris and the artist did not make the appointment as promised. I reasoned that the façade of the building would become a backdrop for a portrait of disappointment.

some degree of personal contact. And I can 'hear' his voice in text interviews with Catherine Grenier and others as I read books and articles.

Christian Boltanski was warm, giving and patient but a little perplexed by the fact that I did not seem to be engaging with his entire body of work even though I had explained I was there to focus on a *The Life of C.B.* He was not particularly interested in my theory that *The Life of C.B.* is a new form of serial work since he does not acknowledge the seriality in his work beyond the act of re-presentation [in the manner of Sol LeWitt]. While the artist becomes restless easily he remains polite. I saw this restlessness when I arrived and my nervous explanation was too complex and again when I read a short passage from Umberto Eco. Throughout the interview I watched for the signs. When engaged he was perfectly content to talk and tell stories. My task was to keep him engaged.

There was a healthy push pull in the interview between the areas I wanted to explore and the areas Christian Boltanski felt he wished to discuss and the stories he wanted to tell. It was not the fluid interview I might have hoped for and this was exacerbated by the lack of a common language but it was in no way disappointing especially from my perspective. The lack of a common language, however, does not allow for subtlety on either side but we were making a memory as he and I discussed. We were enacting his belief that we were making a memory that would last as long as we are alive. I suggested maybe longer because the exegesis is placed in a library but at some point perhaps that too will be destroyed and then the memory is gone completely. He was particularly engaged on this point.

I had intended to hand write my interview notes, as I have done since 1998, and to use a digital recorder as a back up. Half way through the interview I realised I had not taken out the recorder and it was too late to stop the flow of the interview. I had to keep writing. Strangely, in interviews I have conducted across Australia, when my eyes were not on the subject I became invisible and in turn the interview subject would relax and talk with enthusiasm while I wrote – my apparent invisibility seemed to give rise to a freedom to express stories not usually told. In many cases subjects specified that a recording device was not to be used. However, Christian Boltanski seemed a little surprised that I was hand documenting our conversation. When I looked down to write he slowed down, as if to give me time, he did not keep talking to an 'absent' writer but waited for me to engage with him again, to have constant eye contact. This is a cultural difference I had not considered prior to the interview.

## Nicole DURLING

Senior Curator, Museum of Old and New Art (MONA), Hobart

The interview with Nicole Durling took place at MONA on 3 March 2011 and was hand documented.

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By chance I read a newspaper story in 2009 about a new work by French artist Christian Boltanski, purchased by David Walsh for MONA.<sup>25</sup> Subsequently, when the decision was made to complete a doctorate at the Tasmanian College of the Arts, it became clear that this work, *The Life of C.B.*, 2010- , would become important to the research project.

In preparation for the meeting with Nicole Durling I visited *The Life of C.B.* on 24 January 2011, three days after the official opening of MONA.

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### How did this work come about? Was it a commission?

It is a little unclear but our international curator, Jean-Hubert Martin (previously the Director of the Centre Pompidou in Paris and of Düsseldorf's Museum Kunst Palast), who curated Christian Boltanski's work for the 2011 Venice Biennale, introduced David Walsh to Christian Boltanski.

David Walsh loves the phone book works by Boltanski, such as, *Les Abonnés du Téléphone* 2005 and *Telephone subscribers*, 2000 which he saw at Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.

David Walsh enjoys technology and its possibilities. He also loves the clothing stacks an example of which can be seen in the Boltanski Gallery, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.<sup>26</sup> [In 2010 Boltanski created a monumental work for The Armory, New York, titled, *No Man's Land*, utilizing tons of used clothing and in 2010 for Monumenta he created *Personnes*, once again using tons of used clothing.]

In the first instance David Walsh had an interest in the work of Christian Boltanski and the artist's obsessive focus on the ordinary – people, memories, traces. But *The Life of C.B.* developed upon more organic lines. It may have been an idea Boltanski had and was waiting for an opportunity to express.

Eventually the two went to dinner in Paris. They seemed to like something about each other and over the space of the dinner the work began to develop. There was a lot of jovial banter and Christian Boltanski playfully teased David Walsh by saying he could not afford to buy one of his works. Perhaps that is where the idea for the price emerged – the playful notion of putting a major work on layby. What took form that night was broad to begin with, involving a live feed, computer and mobile phone. But it was clear, whatever the form of the work, the two wanted an ongoing intellectual commitment rather than a single sales transaction lacking in humanity.

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<sup>25</sup> Glaetzer, S 2010, 'Walsh puts his money on life as art', *The Mercury*, Edition 1, 2 January, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> In 1989 Christian Boltanski created *Storeroom of the Children's Museum I* and *II* for the exhibition *Histoires de Musée*. The works are now housed in the Boltanski Gallery of the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. *Storeroom of the Children's Museum I* is an installation of children's clothes on six rows of metal shelving in the former storeroom of the Children's Museum located in the basement of the museum. It is lit by 28 desk lamps attached to the top of the shelves. *Storeroom of the Children's Museum II* is an installation of 55 framed photographs of children with installed lighting.

Both men consider themselves humanists and therefore this approach suited them. Whatever happened on that night, and exactly how the work and the agreement developed, has faded into folklore and a multiplicity of variations on a theme have taken the place of truth. Essentially the work continues Boltanski's practice of gathering, just as his heartbeat work does.

In recent times Boltanski has become interested in installing works in bunker-like constructions in remote places all over the world. He considers Hobart, Tasmania, a remote destination. This is quite unusual for an artist who believes it is unnecessary to leave a capital city like Paris. The archive of heartbeats, *Les Archives du Coeur*, has been installed in a bunker on Teshima, a remote Japanese Island.<sup>27</sup> Like his work for MONA the Teshima work is a permanent, ongoing, project – a serial work.

The Mercury story was not specific about the number of cameras and subsequent stories suggest variations in the number of cameras. How many cameras have been installed and where have they been installed?

There are three cameras set up in Boltanski's studio. The artist determined where they would be placed. One captures a view of his desk and computer, another captures a view of a lounge area and a third captures his work area. Within the studio there is a mezzanine floor that adds to the complexity of reading the feeds.

Christian Boltanski has trained himself to sit easily in the gaze of the camera where a visitor to the studio may not feel so at ease.

The presentation of the work on multiple screens in the bunker prompts the spectator to ask a number of questions. What is shown on each screen and what is the decision making process regarding the capture? Occasionally the screen feed is quite jerky and sometimes the feed appears edited. Is there any allowable editing?

In the bunker at MONA there are nine screens and a vast library capacity in which to store the ever-increasing archive of discs.

The top three screens are live capture, the middle line of screens show a twelve-hour delay, and the bottom line of screens show edited highlights. Technicians have been instructed to record any movement for say ten seconds then stop, which gives an interrupted image. There is no night vision.

There is a need to refine the technology which gives a jerky feed at the moment but that is simply a teething problem. The bit rate is too high at the moment so if there is much movement the image pixilates. Sometimes there are technical problems, such as the Internet stream suddenly dying, which means the screen drops to black.

The feed from the cameras in the studio are all digitally streamed to a server on site at MONA, and recorded on to Blu-ray discs [BD is an optical disc storage medium designed to supersede the DVD format]. At the moment the feeds are backed up on a hard drive.

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<sup>27</sup> Teshima is a small rural island located in the Seto Inland Sea separating Honshu and Shikoku, two of Japan's main islands. Teshima has a small population of 1,000. The island was made famous by a major toxic waste scandal in the 1980s. Subsequently, in an attempt to revitalize the economy of the island focus has centred on contemporary art. Along with seven neighbouring islands Teshima hosted the inaugural Setouchi Art Festival 2010, a festival to be held every three years. The Teshima Art Museum and six permanently installed works remain for visitors to experience between the festivals. Boltanski's, *Les Archives du Coeur* is one of those works.



It is not known how long hard disk back up will be continued. [Durling wonders aloud if they should go organic and just retain the archive of BDs. David Walsh would prefer this.] But if the technology fails it means there is no backup, which in turn feeds into the human anxiety about loss, which is so much a part of Boltanski's practice. We are scared about losing part of the archive particularly at this early stage when there are a few things to iron out about the running of the technology.

I first visited *The Life of C.B.* on 24 Jan 2011. During the thirty minutes I was there watching the screens a visitor to C.B.'s studio, who seemed quite agitated, climbed a ladder to turn a camera off. Does this kind of occurrence threaten the integrity of the work?

Probably neither David nor Christian would care as long as the camera eventually comes back on. David Walsh wants no control over the work and would not seek to intervene.

Who called into play the 'law' of probability as part of the purchase agreement?

That would be David Walsh. He understands probability and can 'see' or intuit the way probability will play out.

What is the legal agreement between the purchaser (David Walsh/MONA) and Christian Boltanski?

MONA owns the work and the contract itself, is considered part of the artwork. On Christian Boltanski's death the work is considered paid for in full. There is a contractual obligation to keep the archive in tact, however the work itself may be shown in other ways considered suitable by MONA and David Walsh. Should David Walsh die within the eight-year agreement period the contract remains the same. The project is deemed over when there is no life – when Christian Boltanski is dead (but interestingly, also alive).

This archiving of the self raises questions. Is it arrogant, beautiful or merely culturally significant? The answer is yet to arrive.

What happens after Boltanski's death? Does David Walsh remove the entire structure when Boltanski dies?

The work has been accessioned, the contract filed, it is entirely owned by MONA. There is no reason why the bunker would be removed because the work would live on but this is an unanswered question at this time and there exists the freedom to present the work in different ways (provided the archive is kept in tact).

In a recent article Christian Boltanski is quoted as saying the footage would be going to Tasmania, 'a place people do not go.' Does he really believe that the work will not be seen by many visitors (local, national or international) or alternatively, that the work will not be seen by many who matter in the art world? Is there some degree of cynicism here?

Christian Boltanski may have underestimated the flow of tourists and the national and international interest in the museum. He can be a bit arrogant and sometimes contradicts himself. He might also have been romanticising. Christian Boltanski might consider success greater if there was no access at all. In this way he introduces an absurdist element. In that context Tasmania is rather like a compromise – not too many viewers because of the distance

and yet better than no access at all.

Who at MONA monitors the work and who archives the footage?

Technicians monitor, maintain and deliver the work. They copy the feed onto BD's and place them in the archive. The process is at arms length from both the gallery curators and David Walsh (who has already made it clear he has no wish to intervene in the work).

Why is the work situated so far from the gallery? Visitors arriving and departing are likely to be distracted and fail to recognise the bunker as significant. There is no signage to indicate what is in the structure (apart from the site map which is accessible to all when they arrive at the gallery proper but not necessarily committed to memory when there is so much to be seen). In fact every attempt seems to have been made to deter the visitor. The 'shed' is nondescript, more like a services structure than a place inhabited by an artist described by Hans-Ulrich Obrist (co-director of the Serpentine Gallery, London), as one of the most revered, living artists in France.<sup>28</sup> Who designed the shed? Whose decision was it to present the work like this?

Christian Boltanski determined the positioning and the style of housing. All in keeping with his current interest in developing bunkers across the world in remote locations in which he installs works. He did not wish to install the work within an environment where people are expecting to view or experience art. Perhaps in his wish to be outside of the expected paradigm he is attempting to create a greater poignancy.

Boltanski has often expressed his preference for alternative sites for his installations, rather than succumbing to the restrictions of conventional galleries and now with his bunkers he is taking this preference a step further.

In passing, I suggest to Nicole Durling that GoMA, the MCA and MONA, are all interesting, 'alive', art museums on water, all with a focus on contemporary art, all interested in scale and excitement. Could these galleries become the new art trail, especially for international travellers, leaving the more conventional Australian city-based galleries behind?

MONA does not focus on contemporary art alone and if David Walsh could not show his antiquities he would close the doors.

My final objective was to establish an interview with Christian Boltanski in his Paris studio. I ask Durling for her assistance and she kindly agrees.<sup>29</sup>

NOTE: I thank David Walsh, Senior Curator Nicole Durling, Media Manager and Research Curator Delia Nichols and Viv Carroll, now Cinemona Curator, for their invaluable assistance.

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<sup>28</sup> Obrist, HU 2011, Christian Boltanski, *The life of C.B.*, in '2010-Present', in Birnbaum, D, Cotter, S, et al 2011, *Defining contemporary art – 25 years in 200 pivotal artworks*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, p. 452.

<sup>29</sup> Due to the artist's busy international schedule it took five months (from March to August 2011) and several emails from Nicole Durling to gain a positive response. When Christian Boltanski's invitation arrived I gratefully accepted the opportunity to meet the artist in his Malakoff studio, in October 2011.

## Dr Doris McILWAIN

Dr Doris McIlwain is an Associate Professor in Psychology at Macquarie University.

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This preliminary, self-determined research project titled *Five Appointments*, took the form of a series of five, one-hour, informal and unstructured, appointments with Dr Doris McIlwain.<sup>30</sup> The objective of *Five Appointments* was to stimulate thinking and ideas related to the research topic. Originally titled, *The Allure of the Serial* the focus of my research shifted over time (to be renamed *The Ever Present Eye*) and the original inclusiveness, especially related to serial architecture and music, gradually drifted from the exegesis. Despite extremely fruitful conversations with Dr McIlwain in this area I have not included this data however it remains archived as a future resource.

The *Five Appointments* began in Sydney, on 20 September 2011. Each appointment was hand documented.

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### Appointment 1: Café Envy, Summerhill, 20 September 2011, 12.30pm

We began by discussing the 400-word proposal, *The Allure of the Serial*. The proposal included discussion of Christian Boltanski's work, *The Life of C. B.*, serial artists such as Sol LeWitt and the overlap of serialism into architecture and music.

Dr McIlwain suggested Roy Lichtenstein's paintings derived from comic serials. This was a direction I had not considered. A relationship does exist between comic serials, cartoons (serials) and radio and television series (serials).

Given my interest in the relevance of architecture to the quality of life, and the effect of place and space on the human psyche, the conversation included discussion of serial architecture. Dr McIlwain brought three sites in the US, Canada and Germany to my attention (this material has been archived for future use).

Finally, we discussed the Austrian/British philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) and his obsession with family resemblance – another form of serial.

### Appointment 2: Lunch, Moretti's, Norton Road, Leichhardt, 21 September, 12pm

We began by discussing the concept and value of the repeatable as it applies to the narrative, the degree of story telling inherent in the serial and the adaption of the serial concept to writing, radio and television.

The Boltanski work, *The Life of C.B.* reminds us that the CCTV camera is an unrelenting eye. An unthinking instrument that captures in a non-narrative manner whatever happens within its gaze. CCTV is a recorder of unconscious patterning (human or otherwise) and by virtue of its 'capture', an unconscious voyeur. What becomes problematic is the

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<sup>30</sup> In 2010 architects Woodhead International were shortlisted for the Venice Architecture Biennale. I was invited to join the cross-disciplinary team selected to contribute to the submission. Dr Doris McIlwain was also a member of this team. More than a year later, once the decision to begin a doctoral research project was made, I looked to Dr McIlwain as an inspirational thinker.

control of CCTV by humans.

In contrast aleatoric poetry exists in the actions of the wind-driven twirling mirror toys or 'innocent eyes' that traditionally inhabit birdcages. The 'innocent eye' and my experience of the accidental effect of wonder would become the inspiration for the making of a work, *Arcadia*, 2011-2015, included within the thesis of this research and shown for the first time in a solo exhibition titled, *Veiled*, at the Bayside Arts & Cultural Centre, Melbourne in January-February 2012.

In 1992 a documentary series titled *Sylvania Waters* heralded a new kind of 'real-life' soap opera or 'reality TV', where the lives of a single family were captured over a six month period by a camera crew who lived in the same house as the subjects. This was a series based on voyeurism. The voyeurism of the audience and the voyeurism of the camera crew employed to capture material likely to tantalise the audience and bring them back to the television for all six episodes.

In 2009 an exhibition titled, *Reality Check: watching Sylvania Waters* was staged at the Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre.<sup>31</sup> Unlike the CCTV camera or the bird cage mirror toys, the camera crew were thinking beings, able to both sensor what they saw or incite particular human behaviours in order to capture them on camera. The camera crew could follow the action from room to room, indoors and outdoors, in contrast to the mirrors or CCTV cameras, which lose capture if the subject strays from the fixed field surveilled. Over the six-month period the family became so accustomed to the presence of the cameras they forgot they were there. They lowered their protective mechanisms and in effect were, 'unmasked'. There is a non-narrative parallel here with the cameras in Christian Boltanski's studio.

Serial attachment is a concept that can be applied to the radio serial, although many generations of younger people may not have heard a traditional radio serial. I can recall as a teenager doing my high school homework on the kitchen bench next to the radio while my mother cooked dinner. Remembered serials of the day were: *When a Girl Marries*, *Blue Hills* (with its carefully numbered episodes), *Superman* (sponsored by Glen Ewin Jam), *Dr Paul*, and *Deadly Nightshade*.

In the genre of the radio serial the human voice, Dr McIlwain suggests, creates the atmosphere because there is no vision to aid the audience. The microphone in this genre is an innocent recorder of the voices (capturing what is offered in its defined zone) with, in this case, occasional support in terms of audio engineering or postproduction. The tone of voice causes us to imagine images of characters, places and occurrences. The audience works with the serial in a cooperative manner – the audience imagining, speculating, emotionally connected. Through their connectedness the audience becomes part of the invention, identifying with the characters, empathising or feeling animosity towards the characters. Features of the voice become almost as important as the skills of the writers. Dr McIlwain believes that radio is a space that communicates presence in time with the audience.

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<sup>31</sup> Mudie Cunningham, D 2009, *Reality check: watching sylvania waters*, exhibition catalogue, 10 October-29 November 2009, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre, viewed 21 September 2011, <<http://www.thecommercialgallery.com/uploads/a2a881152f2a5e9d62e8820e.pdf>>.

Talking books have a place within this discussion because they again rely on voice qualities in the way radio relies on the voice. In the case of talking books it is usually a single voice and the audience is drawn into the story by virtue of the power of that single voice and the quality of the writing, to provoke audience projection and identification.

According to Dr McIlwain we long for the familiar. We seek the 'the mother', the other, in such connections – stories of love, soothing voices, fearful scenarios and scenarios that provoke curiosity. 'The voice (of the mother) in time with the child communicates presence, security. A secure child does not remain on the lap it becomes curious.'<sup>32</sup> By contrast, television is so aurally and visually stimulating that it tends to close down audience projection and imagination, because it is often more vivid than life.

In talking about the importance of the voice Dr McIlwain spoke about songbirds raised in isolation. In isolation the songbird develops song without any of the flourishes that characterise the territorial song of the birds raised in their natural environment. Particular song is a mark of species, biology and culture and individual songs link with the community of birds to complete the song.

Doctors currently believe a small child in Hobart, born of parents with two languages will not talk until she is three. Her father talks to her only in Dutch and her mother talks only in English. When she begins to talk, which is predicted to be about three years of age, she will be spontaneously bilingual. This is a well-documented occurrence and not unusual. In this example the song of language taught by the child's community (her parents) happens in the same way that the song of the songbird is taught to new chicks.

A term to explore: *temporal discounting* – a form of mental time travel to make the future now, with less importance placed on past or future.

#### Appointment 3: Universal Restaurant, Darlinghurst, 22 September, 8pm

This meeting was experimental in that I invited both partners to attend the dinner. Attendees: Dr Doris McIlwain, Professor John Sutton, Cognitive Sciences, Macquarie University<sup>33</sup>, Ross Honeywill, Behavioural Scientist and writer, and myself.

Apart from an extraordinary evening and much animated, thought provoking and robust conversation, information of specific interest did not survive the menu or the alcohol. The level of distraction proved too great – a psychological insight in itself.

#### Appointment 4: Café Envy, Summerhill, 24 September, 4.00pm

We began by discussing the proposition that if the serial unites people, does it therefore follow that it has more power than the stand-alone, the single performance or conversation?

- A series tends to be an entity where a single performance is an event.
- A series offers the ability to return to 'the familiar' where a single event does not.

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<sup>32</sup> McIlwain, D 2011, appointment 2 of the series, *Five appointments* with Greer Honeywill, 21 September. See also John Bowlby (1907-1990) a British psychologist, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst interested in childhood behaviour and development. Bowlby is the author of *Attachment Theory*.

<sup>33</sup> Professor John Sutton, among many projects, is interested in John Digby, a 17<sup>th</sup> century philosopher, poet and pirate who used viper's blood as a curative for his wife.

- A series implies a gathering together – experiencing together, for instance, like flying in formation.
- A series promotes prospection and speculation about ‘the next’...what will happen?
- A series allows sharing – conversation with others who watch the same series. The series engenders communities who take delight in sharing the fiction and creating conjecture about what will happen in the next episode. The series promotes camaraderie however, the act of shared conjecture may also divide the community. The community may disagree about possible outcomes and character behaviour and the act of disagreement may be both entertaining and irritating.
- A series allows the audience to be captured by content. ‘Content capture stops you being abstract enough to look for a concrete platform.’<sup>34</sup>

I raised the subject of serial killers and the ‘art’ they often make. I remain curious about the motivation of the perpetrator who creates such works while simultaneously performing serial atrocities. Dr McIlwain says:

The act is often about a lack of resolution. Often the perpetrators harbour a residue of desire – the moment passes, unresolved. Serial killers are often secretive, possessing secrets, possibly shameful secrets, the guilt of which aids the development of quite an explosive personality. The documentary patternmaking by the perpetrator in advance of a murder is often a ‘writing out’ of how the individual feels. In some instances it appears not unlike a piece of contemporary art patterning the signifier and signified. Unconscious logic may be at work – the meaning veiled even to the perpetrator. Patternmaking is also the method used by Police in their attempts to apprehend killers.<sup>35</sup>

Fiction tends to convey the perpetrators as knowing but Dr McIlwain believes they do not necessarily know. She believes the art of serial killers is often an, acting out, to ‘see’ how their actions feel. Life is a process, ‘life is acting out’. The killer ‘acts out’ to review feelings and reactions in a series of self regulated episodes.<sup>36</sup>

‘Patternmaking or planning, employed by killers is also part of a reflective loop, a device employed by humans in general that allows one to view what one has done (in life or in a specific activity).’<sup>37</sup>

#### Meeting 5: The Pier Restaurant, Rose Bay, 25 September, 1pm

This meeting summarised the previous discussions and led to further recommendations for research.

Words and concepts: serial, capture, content capture, surveillance, inadvertent capture, accidental capture, concept acquisition, reflectivity, self-reflectivity and discovering the apparently overlooked in the process of content capture.

Michel Serres (1930- )

Serres is a French philosopher specialising in epistemology (the origin, nature, methods and limits of human knowledge). He is responsible for popularising scientific knowledge

<sup>34</sup> McIlwain, D 2011, appointment 4 of the series of *Five appointments* with Greer Honeywill, 24 September.

<sup>35</sup> McIlwain, D 2011, appointment 4 of the series of *Five appointments* with Greer Honeywill, 24 September.

<sup>36</sup> McIlwain, D 2011, appointment 4 of the series of *Five appointments* with Greer Honeywill, 24 September.

<sup>37</sup> McIlwain, D 2011, appointment 4 of the series of *Five appointments* with Greer Honeywill, 24 September.



and for looking at the differences between the multiple and the unit and the human desire to subsume the unit into the multiple. In the opening section of his book *Genesis*, Serres offers 'a new object for philosophy.' This new object is the multiple. His aim, he says, is 'to raise the brackets and parentheses...whereby we shove multiplicities under unities.' He warns of the dangers of subsuming 'multiplicity under unity', and poses a profound and challenging question: 'can I possibly speak of multiplicity itself without ever availing myself of the concept? Space, all space, any space, whether it is biological, geo-physical, socio-political or epistemological, is composed of the multiple,' but, Serres, points out, 'we are fascinated by the unit; only a unity seems rational to us.' Serres was a colleague and friend of the late philosophers Michel Foucault and Jules Vuillemin.<sup>38</sup>

Bruno Latour (1947- )

A French philosopher and anthropologist interested in science, technology and theories such as 'actor-network theory' and 'we have never been modern' a denial of modernism and postmodernism. In his essay for 'eFlux', *Some Experiments in Art and Politics*, Latour highlights the work of artist Tomas Saraceno to illuminate his ideas on networks and spheres.<sup>39</sup>

Tomás Saraceno (1973- )

Saraceno is an Argentinian-born artist who lives and works in Berlin. He has an interest in science, utopian theories and astronomical constellations. Many of his works, such as *Cloud Cities*, utilise crystalline inflatables (refer to images on the Tanya Bonakdar Gallery website).<sup>40</sup> In 2009 Saraceno created, *Galaxies forming along filaments, like droplets along the strands of a spider's web* for the Venice Biennale. This work examined the ability of the web of a Black Widow Spider to suspend extreme weights because of its geometric structure.

**Summary:** The *Five Appointments* provided an invaluable opportunity to begin the process of enquiry. There were no hard outcomes merely stimuli supporting further research in areas I would not necessarily have considered. Initially I walked away from the sessions thinking that while they were exciting and enjoyable, little had been achieved and it is only in the writing up of the sessions and subsequent discussions with supervisors that I have realised what a stimulating process it had been. So much more was achieved than I imagined. Dr Doris McIlwain was a remarkable sounding board, guide and collaborator.

**Post Script:** I returned to Hobart and patterns of normality such as attending the hairdresser four days later on Friday 30 September 2011. At the basin the young hairdresser asked what I had been doing lately. For some obscure reason I decided to tell her about the sessions with Dr McIlwain not imagining we would find any common ground. When I stopped talking she asked, 'Have you read the paper by Robert Zajonc on *Mere Exposure Effect* or his *Social Facilitation* theory?'<sup>41</sup> I was flabbergasted. In at least four decades of visitations to a legion of hairdressers, not one has even placed a serious intellectual challenge in front of me as Sarah did

<sup>38</sup> Serres, M 1997, *Genesis* (1982), University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.

<sup>39</sup> Latour, B 2011, 'Some experiments in art and politics', *e-flux* #23, New York, viewed 26 May 2013, <<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/some-experiments-in-art-and-politics/>>.

<sup>40</sup> <<http://www.tanyabonakdargallery.com/artists/toms-saraceno/series>>.

<sup>41</sup> The *mere-exposure effect* is a psychological phenomenon by which people tend to develop a preference for things merely because they are familiar with them. In social psychology, this effect is sometimes called the *familiarity principle*. The effect has been demonstrated with words, Chinese characters, paintings, pictures of faces, geometric figures, and sounds. In studies of interpersonal attraction, the more often a person is seen by someone, the more pleasing and likeable that person appears to be. Viewed 16 May 2011, <[http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mere-exposure\\_effect](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mere-exposure_effect)>.

on that day. I asked Sarah more about the paper that Zajonc developed in the 60s. She also recommended that I talk to Associate Professor, Frances Martin, Deputy Head of School of Psychology, University of Tasmania.<sup>42</sup>

### **Further reading arising from the *Five Appointments***

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<<http://www.designboom.com/art/tomas-saraceno-at-venice-art-biennale-09/>>.

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<sup>42</sup> Zajonc, RB 2001, 'Mere exposure: gateway to the subliminal', in *Current directions in psychological science*, vol. 10, no. 6, pp. 224-228.

The following site lists published papers on the *Mere-exposure Effect*, viewed 31 September 2011, <<http://www.cdp.sagepub.com/content/10/6/224>>.

## APPENDIX D

### BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

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Greer Honeywill is a Hobart-based installation artist and writer. In 2003 Honeywill completed a PhD in Fine Art at Monash University for which she was awarded the Mollie Holman Doctoral Medal for academic excellence.

Honeywill has received grants, scholarships and prizes for her artworks, scholarship and published writing. She staged her first solo exhibition in 2002 and since then has staged eleven solo exhibitions and participated in fifty-two, group, collaborative and touring exhibitions. Her works are held in the collections of the Art Gallery of Ballarat, National Library of Australia, Melbourne Convention Centre, BHP Billiton, UniSA and private collections in the US, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

In 2010 she moved from Melbourne to Hobart where she continues to exhibit, write and run a full-time studio practice.